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ABSTRACT

These four reports describe Oklahoma's education-reform efforts, which were mandated by the Education Reform and Funding Act of 1990. Each of the volumes offers an annual report of the ongoing changes in education. Volume 1 focuses on state-appropriated funds for education and per-pupil expenditures. It looks at school consolidation, greater accountability to taxpayers, stronger accreditation standards, and gains in standardized achievement tests. Volume 2 examines academic standards, enrollment figures, teachers' salaries, the basic-skills curriculum, accountability benchmarks, alternative education, character education, and community involvement. The third volume highlights the increases in state appropriations for public schools, the number of graduating high-school seniors who took the ACT college-entrance exam in 1997, how Oklahoma's students compare to students in other southern states, the success of the Reader Leaders' program, and the rise in alternative education. The last volume describes how although state funding increased, Oklahoma's national ranking in per-pupil spending actually fell, from 47th in 1996 to 48th in 1997. It discusses the academic benchmarks set by the state, the number of students who plan on going to college, the state's academic scholars program, per-pupil expenditures, enrollment demographics, funding sources, the number of school districts, teaching standards and salaries, and alternative education. (RJM)

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INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA

THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME ONE

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SANDY GARRETT, STATE SUPERINTENDENT
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JANUARY 1996

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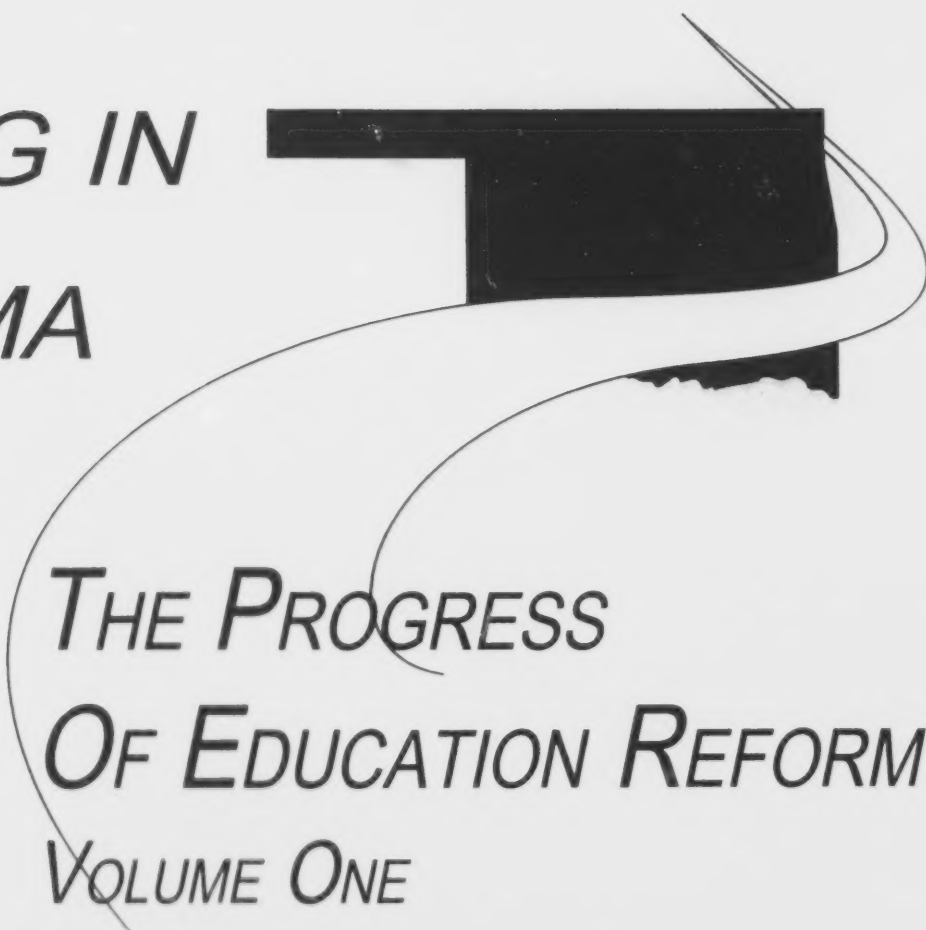
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INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA



THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME ONE

REPRINT

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January 24, 1996

The Honorable Frank Keating, Governor of Oklahoma:
Honorable Members of the Oklahoma Legislature:
The Citizens of Oklahoma:

In 1989, we came together to find a solution for the growing crisis in public education. When Governor Henry Bellmon called the special session that year it was to address this crisis, to find a better way to fund education, to plan for the future and to provide incentives to teachers to stay in Oklahoma and teach Oklahoma students.

You spurred into action Oklahoma Task Force 2000 and they studied the many complex issues. Legislation was drafted, debated, amended and passed. Those of you who were there remember that this was no easy task, but you met the challenge and House Bill 1017 was signed into law.

When we began the implementation of this historic education reform legislation it became increasingly obvious that House Bill 1017 meant more things to more people than it could ever actually provide: it meant consolidation to many urban citizens; it meant additional support for small schools to rural Oklahomans; it meant a pay raise to teachers; it meant new mandates to school administrators; it meant new taxes.

While the Legislature has kept its commitment to fund the Education Reform and Funding Act of 1990, the spirit of the legislation has far surpassed the money available. Public interest in education reform has increased as a result of passage of the bill, the public vote on the referendum, and ongoing implementation of the mandates.

As we continue working our way through the decade of reform outlined in House Bill 1017, I would like to remind all citizens that investing in Oklahoma means investing in education first. As Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Kelly Haney recently noted, "Education reform deserves a great deal of the credit for our recent economic successes. If we want the economic growth to continue, we're going to have to invest the dividends of that success, namely growth revenue, back into our school system."

The State Department of Education, the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education realize that more must be done to assure a positive change in the overall education process. HB 1017 mandates what good teachers and good schools have always worked toward — preparing students for “employment and/or post-secondary education.” We know we must do more, for more students; and do it better, for less money. The partnerships being forged through the School-to-Work initiative and facilitated by OneNet technology can be successful in focusing teaching on more-relevant learning experiences.

But, Oklahoma education is not a widget factory; we do not produce widgets. We educate precious children as well as adults. We help parents — the first teachers of our students — to help their children be successful lifelong learners. We are providing more opportunities than ever before for parent involvement and building a greater sense of community through, with and for our schools.

The following report addresses the results of House Bill 1017 as a primer for your upcoming legislative deliberations. If you have questions or require more information, please contact me at anytime.

Also, let me remind you of the mission of the Oklahoma State Department of Education: to increase student achievement through services to Oklahoma students, parents and schools; leadership for education reform and regulation/deregulation of state and federal laws. We are proud of the progress of our schools which is a result of Oklahomans working together — legislators and educators, businessmen and parents, State Department of Education staff and other concerned citizens.

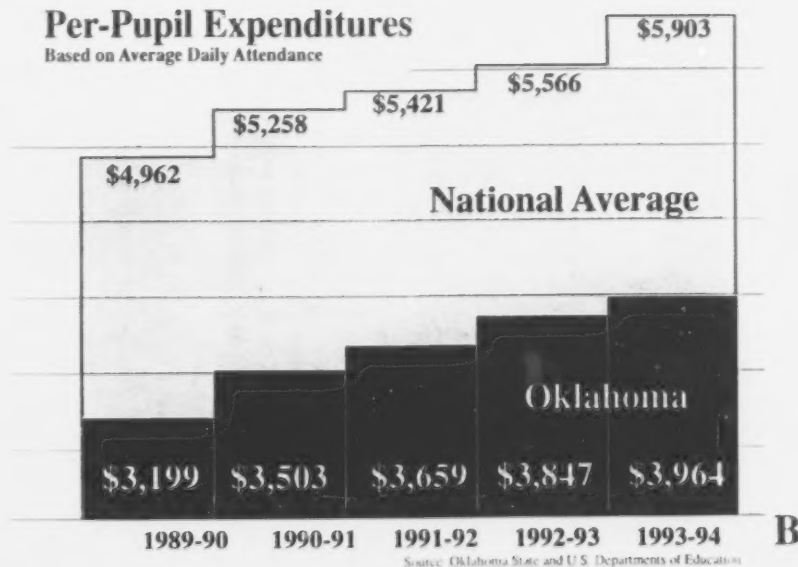
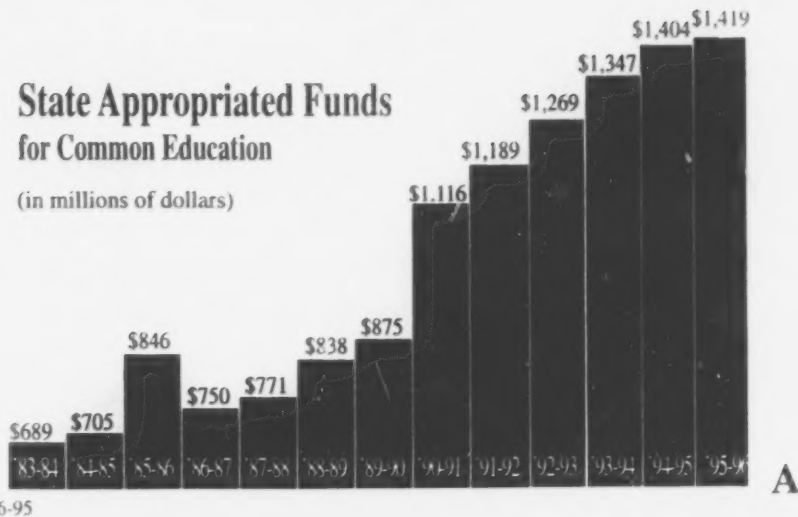
My staff and I stand ready to work with the Legislature and Governor as we build upon this foundation of reform, capitalize on our state's investment in its schools, and work tirelessly to provide the best possible education for all of Oklahoma's children.

Sandy Garrett
State Superintendent

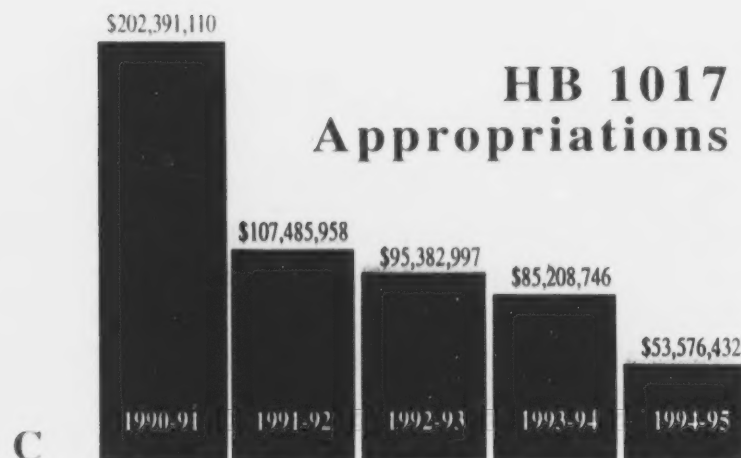
An Investment In Oklahoma's Public Schools:

The Education Reform and Funding Act of 1990, House Bill 1017, was passed about the same time that a few other states were forging their reform legislation, but it contained one key component that others did not have: funding. This major investment by taxpayers has generated the most interest — and controversy — since the bill was signed into law. The need for an increased minimum teacher salary was cited during the special session as THE major “reform” in the bill, which ultimately included a new state aid formula, earmarked school funding and a mandated minimum salary schedule.

As a result of House Bill 1017 and subsequent legislated mandates, total state appropriations for common education have now reached \$1.4 billion. [A] As a result, Oklahoma’s per-pupil expenditures have increased significantly though they remain below the national average. [B]

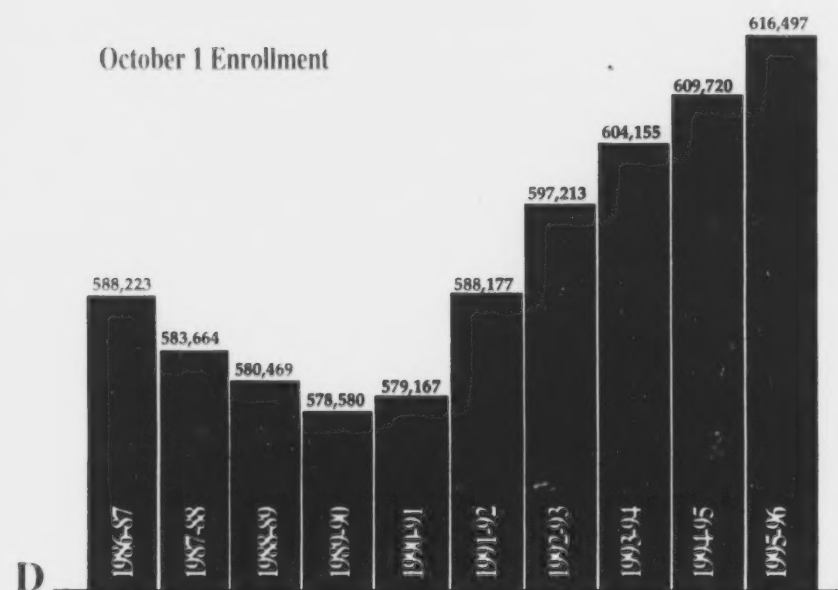


HB 1017 Appropriations



Since 1990, the Legislature has maintained its commitment to funding the bill by appropriating more than \$544 million for HB 1017 mandates in five years. [C]

The student enrollment growth in recent years could not have been anticipated by the framers of the reform legislation. Public school enrollment has increased almost 38,000 students since House Bill 1017 was passed into law. [D] Even if the amount of state funding had stayed at the 1989-90 level, many millions of the dollars appropriated for reform have been expended to provide for these new students. This growth has impacted schools' ability to implement the reforms.



Source: SDE Accreditation 1996

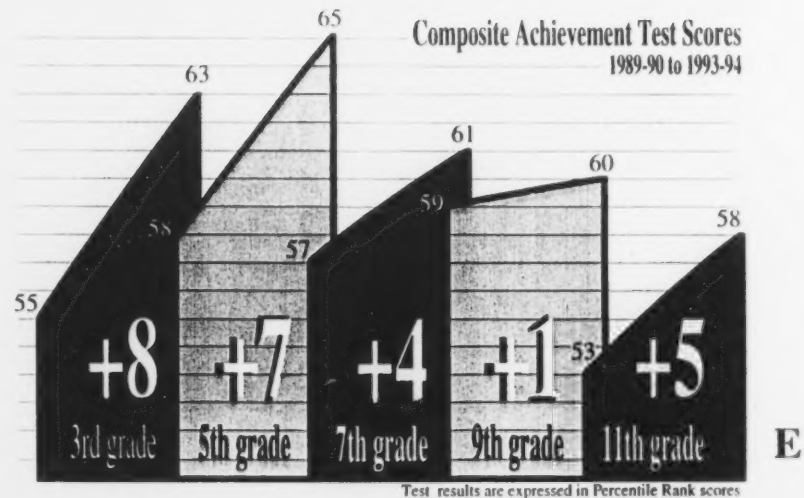
One of the larger portions of new funding went toward reducing class sizes to improve the learning environment. Five years ago, some classes had 35 to 40 or more children per teacher; today the maximum for the all-important elementary grades is 20 students.

Part of the success in increasing test scores for the first five years of education reform may be attributed to lower class sizes and other reform mandates first implemented in the elementary grades. [E] Daily student load for secondary level teachers was mandated at 140 beginning with the 1993-94 school year.

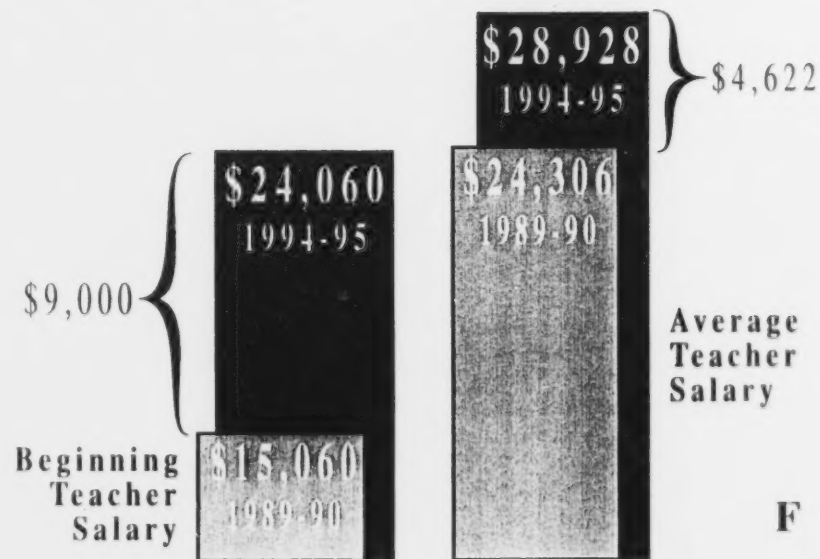
A significant portion of the new funding went to the mandated minimum salary schedule in order to aggressively attract new talent to the teaching profession. In addition, HB 1017 paved the way for districts to adopt incentive pay plans for their employees.

Oklahoma has made a great investment in beginning teacher salaries and some improvement in average salary for teachers. [F]

Also provided was the \$13.3 million Voluntary Consolidation Assistance Fund that resulted in 11 consolidations and 46 annexations, reducing the total number of school districts from 609 to 550. [G]



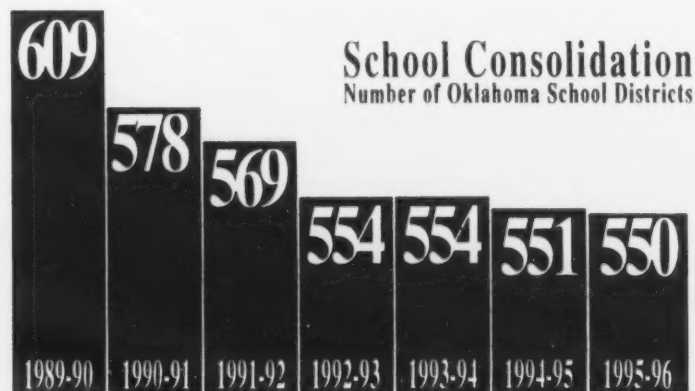
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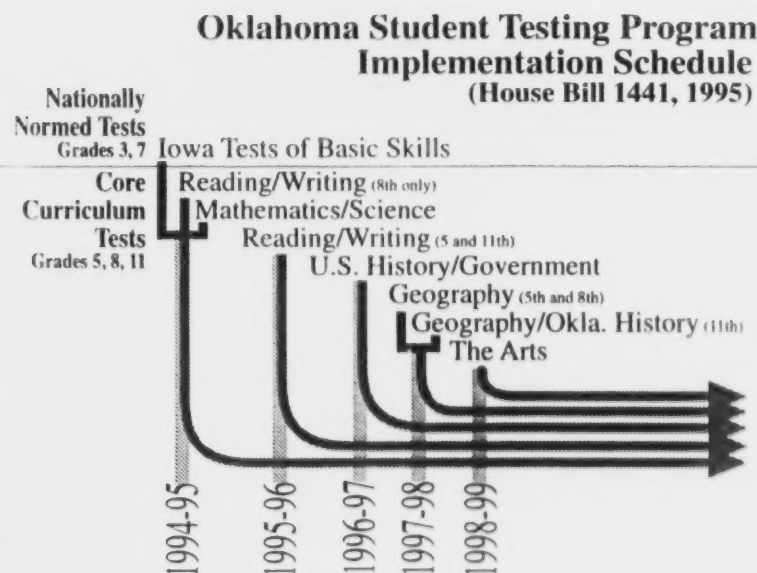


Transfers of students within and between school districts continues to be relatively easy and popular. In the years since HB 1017 was enacted an average of 28,300 transfers were granted each year.

Greater Accountability to Taxpayers:

Few initiatives of state government are as closely monitored as the Education Reform and Funding Act of 1990. In addition to constant evaluation by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and State Board of Education, the Office of Accountability and the Education Oversight Board, created by HB 1017, monitor and annually publish various indicators of performance for the state, each school district and site. These reports are distributed to all legislators, state libraries, school administrators and numerous other interested groups and individuals.

H



For standardized student performance comparisons, students in Grades 3 and 7 are tested

with a national achievement test covering the basic subject areas.

However, the first true measure of the state-mandated curriculum came in the spring of 1995 with administration of the core curriculum tests to students in Grades 5, 8 and 11 in mathematics and science as well as reading and writing in grade 8. Each of the other subject areas will be field-tested and phased in each year through 1999. [H]

The level of satisfactory performance is established by the State Board of Education and the tests results are used to help teachers address skill areas in which individual students need additional instruction. The extent to which the core curriculum is being taught is also reflected by the results. [I] Students who do not perform satisfactorily on the core curriculum test(s) must be offered remediation by the school district and must take the test(s) again the following year.

The four-year Comprehensive Local Education Plan (CLEP) involves schools and communities and educators in long-range planning in three areas: School Improvement, Professional Development, and Capital Improvement. Legislation added the requirement for an alternative education plan component in 1994.

Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test Results, 1995

Grade	Subject	Oklahoma Performance Index	Satisfactory Number/percent of students tested	Unsatisfactory Number/percent of students tested
5	Science	70	34,053 (79%)	9,000 (21%)
8		70	32,137 (75%)	10,759 (25%)
11		70	22,684 (70%)	9,672 (30%)
5	Mathematics	70	34,127 (79%)	8,953 (21%)
8		70	30,127 (70%)	12,792 (30%)
11		70	18,237 (56%)	14,144 (44%)
8	Reading	70	30,004 (70%)	12,639 (30%)
8	Writing	6*	37,634 (88%)	5,188 (12%)

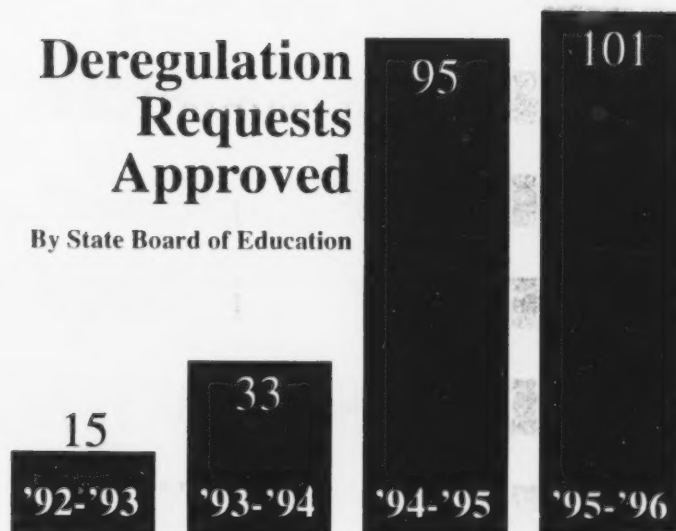
*on a scale of 2-12

Source: Student Assessment Section, State Department of Education, 9/95

I

Deregulation Requests Approved

By State Board of Education



Stronger Accreditation Standards:

The intent of the 1990 reform act was that all students be prepared for "employment and/or post-secondary education." The State Board of Education has adopted and implemented stronger accreditation standards at all levels to assist in accomplishing this goal. These include mandatory kindergarten, school improvement plans, use of teacher assistants, and new teacher employment and due-process standards.

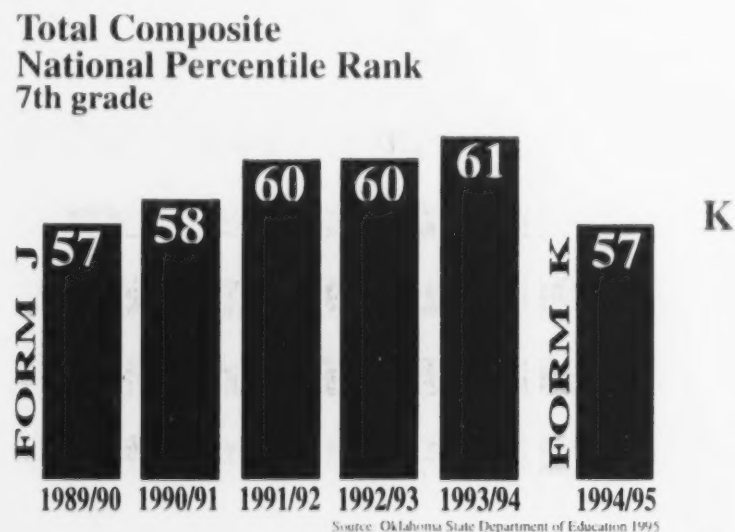
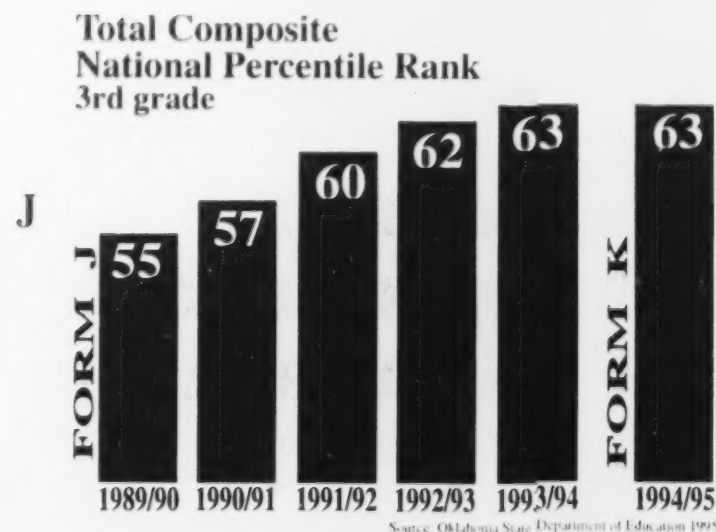
During the past five years, a couple of innovative means of meeting the tougher standards have emerged: deregulation and alternative certification. In 1992, the State Board of Education declared that all rules except those pertaining to health and safety were eligible for deregulation. Since then, a significant amount of effort has been spent reviewing and approving requests for deregulation from rules. As more districts become aware of ways this process helps their schools become more successful, more deregulation proposals will be developed.

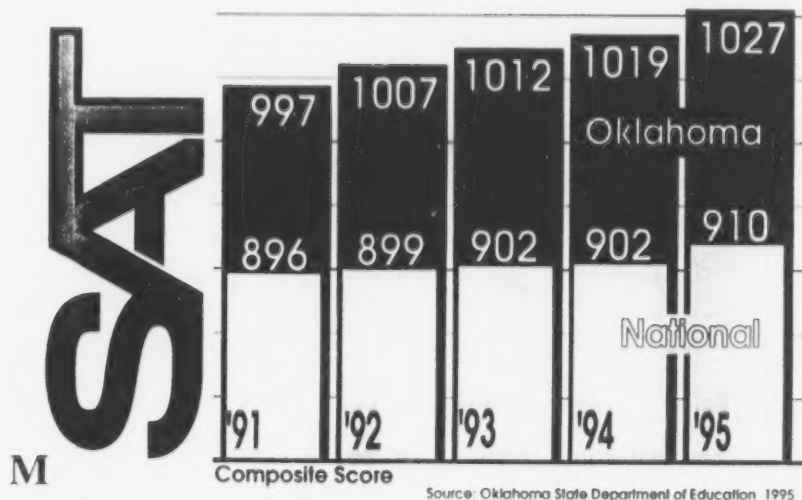
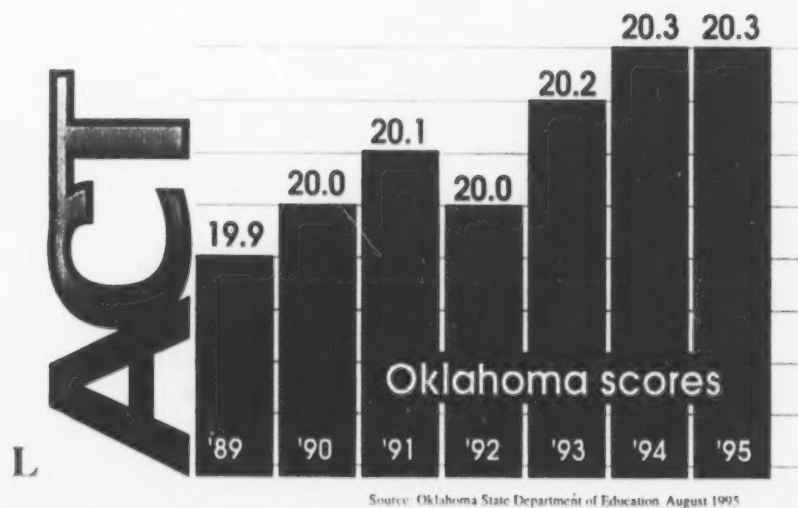
Over a thousand professionals, practicing in fields other than education, now hold certification and are eligible to teach in Oklahoma classrooms as a result of the Alternative Placement Program in HB 1017. A former biochemist now teaching science and a former trial lawyer now teaching government are just two examples of the success of alternative placement. The program allows people without formal education backgrounds to become certified

based on a strong knowledge base and "real-world" practical experience in that field; participants must subsequently complete professional education coursework and pass the applicable teacher certification tests.

Two major accreditation standards continue in their implementation:

- The mandate limiting class size has been one of the most important reforms cited by teachers, but has also been a serious financial difficulty for districts. Mandatory kindergarten, lower class sizes and other new standards at the elementary level are having an impact on students. This is evident in five years of increasing achievement test scores. In addition, scores generally decline when the form, or framework, of the norm-referenced achievement tests is changed as required every five years. This was not the case in 1995 for the third grade, and the initial performance level was maintained for seventh grade. [J, K]





- Oklahoma's first statewide basic-skills curriculum, the Priority Academic Student Skills, was a result of the mandate that "Students must develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, computing and critical thinking. ... [They] must study social studies, literature, languages, the arts, mathematics and science." Development of the common core curriculum provides easier transition for students who move from one district to another as it defines what is expected to be learned at each grade level.

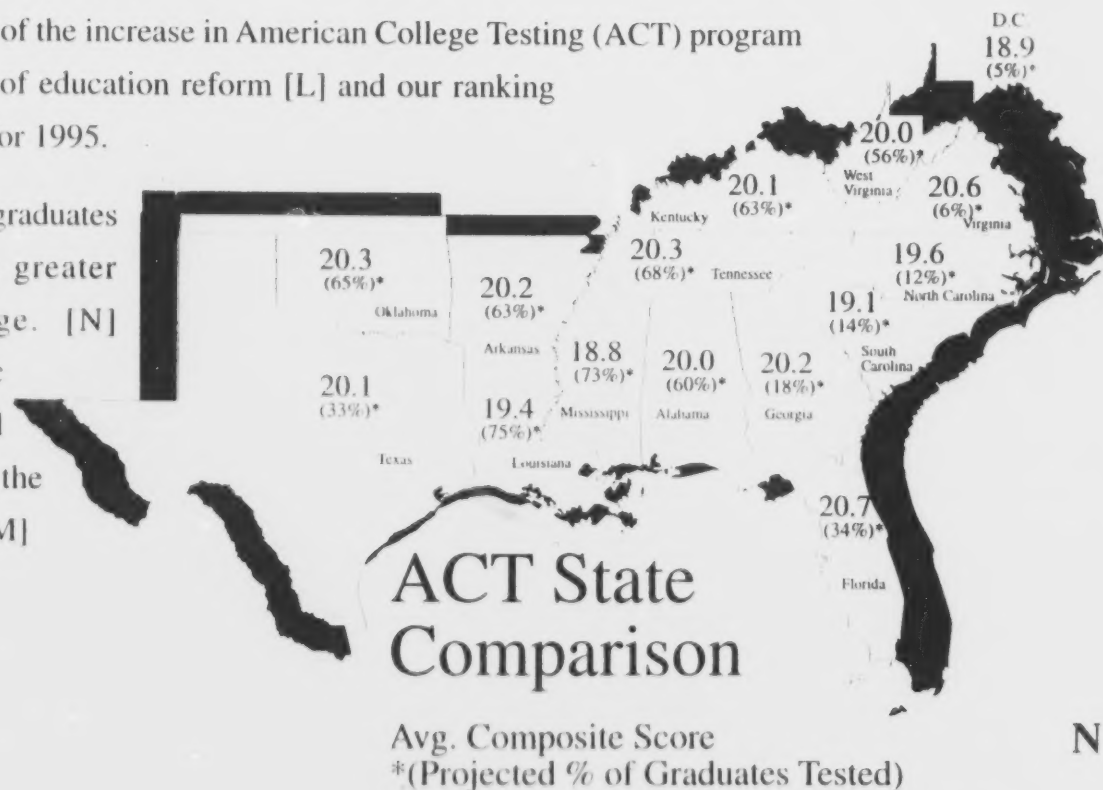
The State Department of Education has conducted numerous workshops to assist teachers in upgrading instruction skills regarding the core curriculum. These have become so popular that districts are hosting regional workshops to lessen the expense on Department programs. Oklahoma history has since been added to the core curriculum, and districts are encouraged to build upon the skills and knowledge outlined in it.

June 30, 1999, is the target date for all schools to meet the new accreditation standards. The State Department of Education is actively working through its Regional Accreditation Officers to assist districts in meeting the goals of House Bill 1017 and related legislation.

Since HB 1017 is a decade-long reform plan which will be completed in 1999, it cannot take credit for all of the successes Oklahoma students have made but the new focus on education statewide has surely played a part.

Oklahomans should be proud of the increase in American College Testing (ACT) program scores during the first six years of education reform [L] and our ranking relative to other southern states for 1995.

In addition, more high school graduates are taking the ACT, showing greater interest in going to college. [N] Oklahoma's average Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score is well above the national average and the highest it has been in 11 years. [M]



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, August 1995

Emphasis on Parent/Community Involvement:

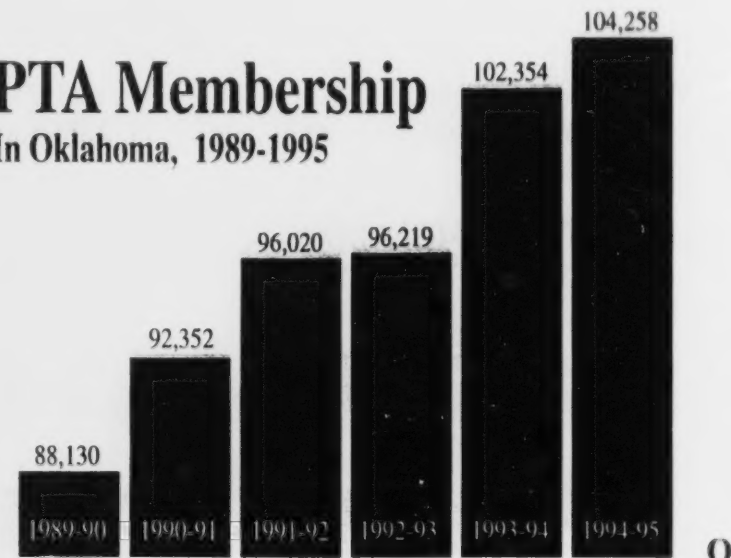
Increased public interest in education reform as a result of passage of the bill, the public vote on the referendum and ongoing implementation of the mandates may be why the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) membership has increased statewide rather dramatically. [O] The Department has been active in development of such successful programs as SoonerStart and Parents As Teachers.

Many of the reforms addressed in HB 1017 encourage parental involvement including allowing community use of school buildings, encouragement of early childhood programs to the Department of Human Services' clients and mandatory teacher inservice training in multicultural and parent outreach.

The keys to community involvement, indeed to all components of Oklahoma's public school system, are the 2,700 locally elected school board members. Requirements for school board member candidacy were added in HB 1017

and education requirements for members were increased. The State Department of Education and the Oklahoma State School Boards Association work together in sponsoring continuing education and new school board member workshops. The department also provides to local board members a one-page quarterly newsletter to keep them up-to-date on education laws and current issues.

PTA Membership In Oklahoma, 1989-1995



Source: Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA), May 1995

Looking Toward 2000:

Oklahoma has a proud public school heritage—one based in practice and in law on decision-making at the local level. Much of the state's education reform effort has been focused on empowering the local school board and administrators to provide quality educational services for children and young adults. The future of Oklahoma's schools will also be founded in local control through further deregulation, opportunities for statutory waivers and increased emphasis on community involvement.

In 1996, the second set of results from criterion-referenced testing based on Oklahoma's core curriculum will be available; full implementation of the core curriculum tests will be complete in the spring of 2000. Nationally normed assessments and other indicators will continue to provide data for the evaluation of this standards-driven reform effort. Without question, Oklahomans will reap great dividends in the twenty-first century from the investments they have made in education today.



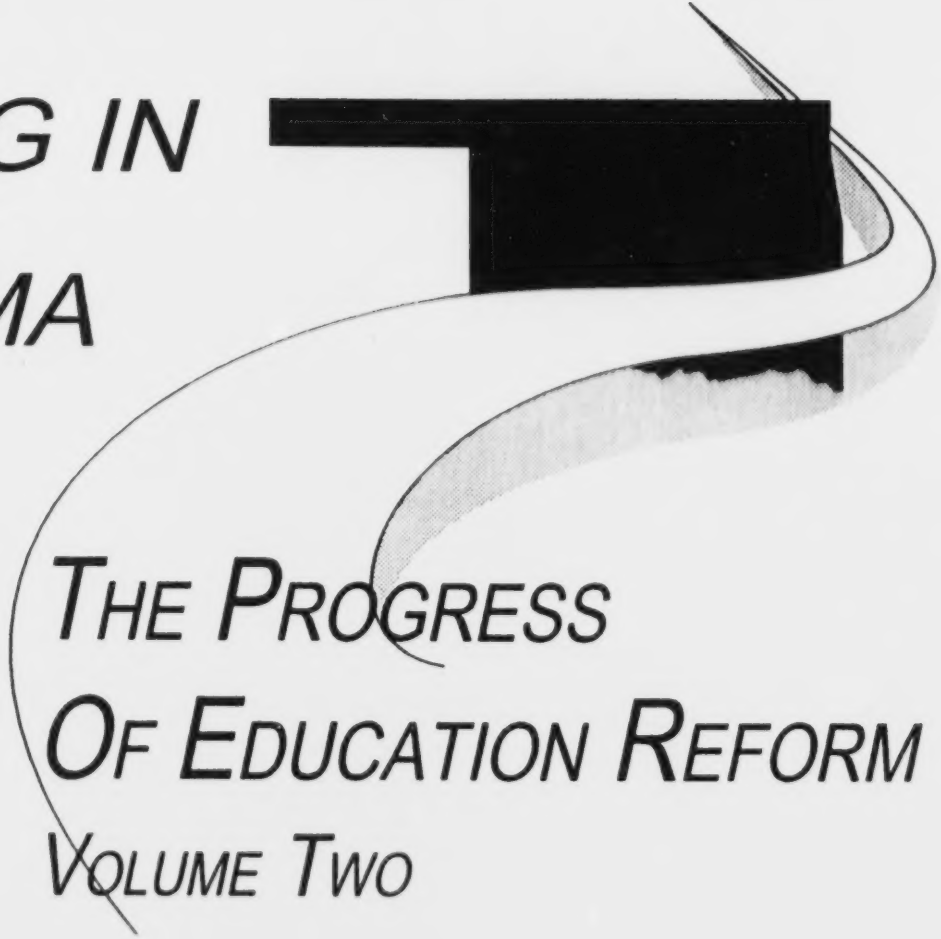
INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA

THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME TWO

SANDY GARRETT, STATE SUPERINTENDENT
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JANUARY 1997



INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA



THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME TWO

REPRINT

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January 27, 1997

The Citizens of Oklahoma:
The Honorable Governor of Oklahoma:
The Honorable Members of the Oklahoma Legislature:

Thank you for taking a few moments to review the following statistical analysis, *Investing in Oklahoma: The Progress of Education Reform, Volume 2*. Volume 1 of this report, published in January 1996, focused on the Education Reform and Funding Act of 1990. This volume is an update of our progress expanded to include other reform legislation, agency collaborations and State Board of Education actions.

While the state Legislature has kept its commitment to fund education reform, the spirit of the 1990 legislation has far surpassed the resources available to achieve all we would like. As we continue working our way through the decade of reform outlined in statute, it is important citizens realize true progress for Oklahoma — academic, social and economic — begins with investing in our children first. This means investing valuable time as parents, investing the knowledge of teachers, investing the support of civic leaders. It is in our schools where boys and girls become adults, where preschoolers become lifelong learners, where opportunities for parental involvement are increasing and where a greater sense of community is developing.

Join us as we celebrate the progress our students are making; progress which is a result of their efforts and those of parents and teachers, legislators and administrators, businessmen and State Department of Education staff, and interested Oklahomans all across our great state. We will continue building upon our new foundation of reform, making the most of — and carefully accounting for — the investments being made in our schools.

We appreciate your support of Oklahoma's boys and girls.

Sincerely,

Sandy Garrett
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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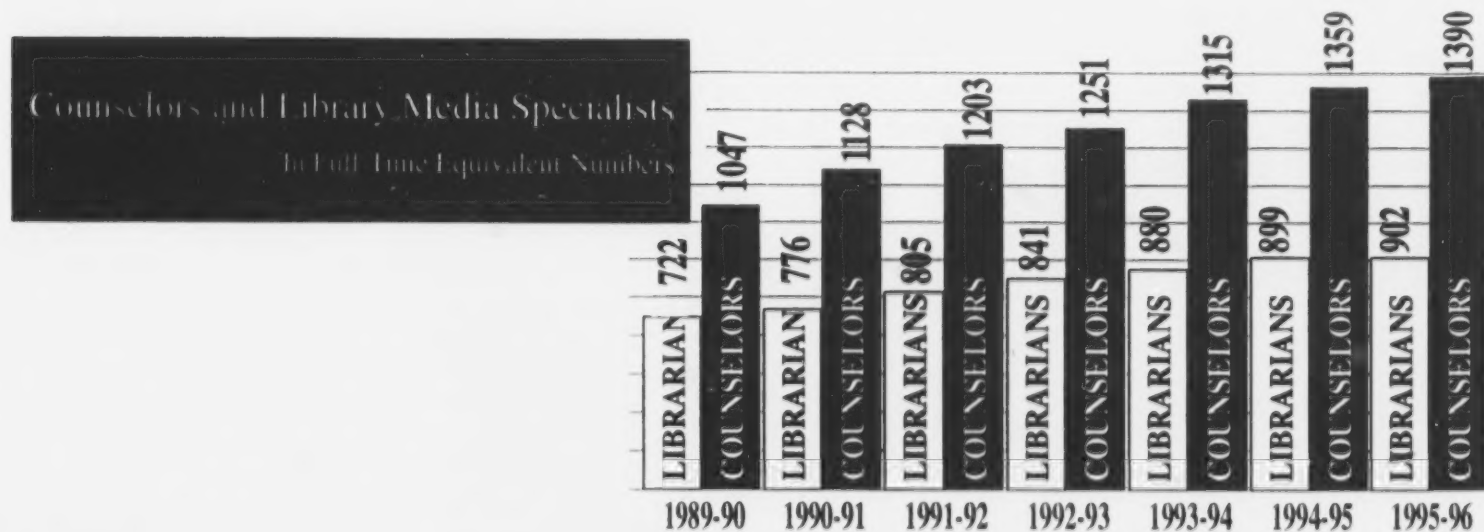
HIGHER STANDARDS

Oklahoma is a national leader in education reform because it established high standards for its schools and students and continues to raise them.

Strengthened school accreditation standards (e.g., lower class sizes, minimum teacher salary schedule, counselor and librarian requirements, and increased local input into decision-making, etc.) have improved the climate and opportunity for learning in Oklahoma schools.

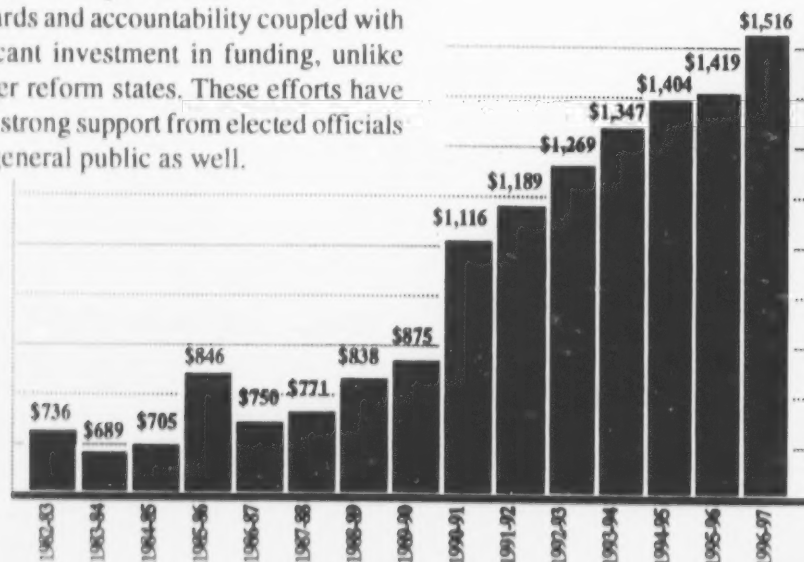
The State Department of Education has conducted numerous workshops to assist teachers and administrators in meeting the stronger standards including the core curriculum mandate. Although most schools already meet mandated standards, June 30, 1999, is the target date for all schools to meet the tougher standards.

Graduation standards were raised in 1996 by increasing the mathematics credits from two to three beginning with the Class of 2000.



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, January 1997

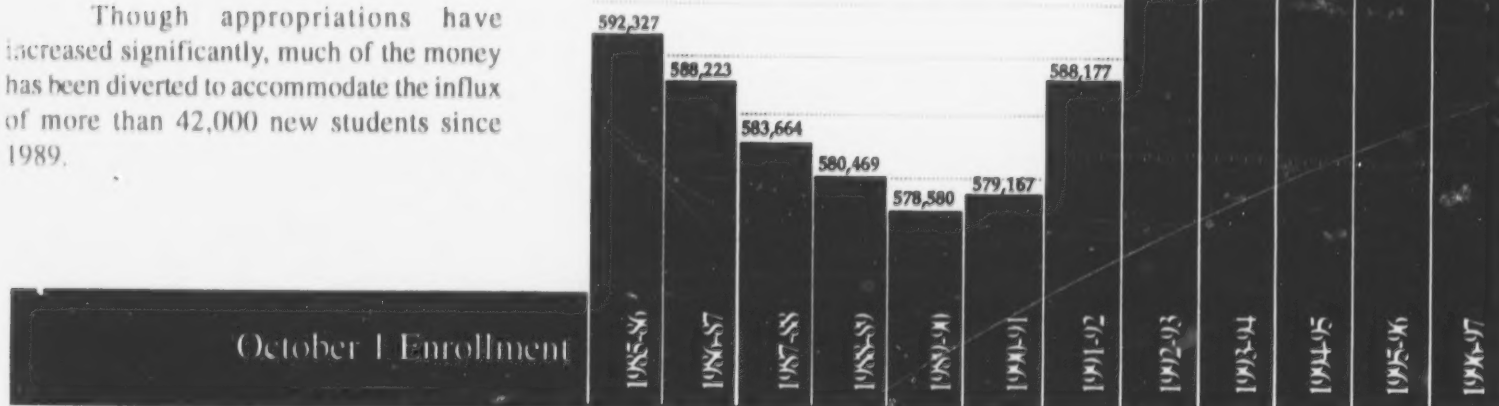
Oklahoma's education reform efforts, much of which began in 1990, were focused on standards and accountability coupled with a significant investment in funding, unlike most other reform states. These efforts have garnered strong support from elected officials and the general public as well.



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, June 1996

State-Appropriated Funds
for Common Education
(expressed in millions)

Though appropriations have increased significantly, much of the money has been diverted to accommodate the influx of more than 42,000 new students since 1989.



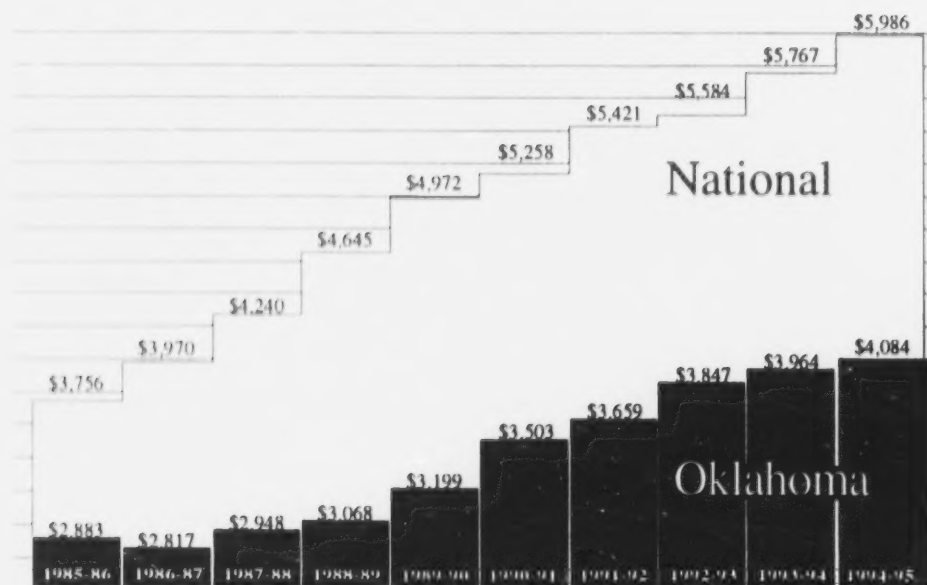
Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, Accreditation, 1996

While Oklahoma has struggled to maintain its investment, progress has been slow toward meeting the national average in per-pupil expenditures and average teacher salary.

1995-96 Estimated Average Teacher Salaries For Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) States

U.S. Average	\$37,794
Regional Average	\$32,366
Maryland	\$41,215
Virginia	\$34,687
Georgia	\$34,307
Tennessee	\$33,451
Florida	\$33,320
Kentucky	\$33,108
West Virginia	\$32,155
Texas	\$32,000
South Carolina	\$31,568
Alabama	\$31,307
North Carolina	\$30,564
Oklahoma	\$30,246
Arkansas	\$29,322
Mississippi	\$27,689
Louisiana	\$26,800

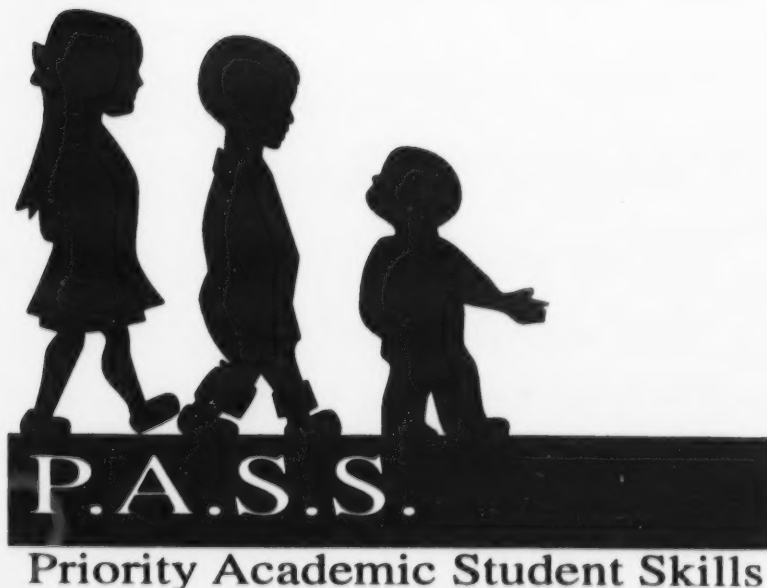
Source: Southern Regional Education Board, 1996



Source: Oklahoma State and U.S. Departments of Education, December 1996

Per-Pupil Expenditures
Based on Average Daily Attendance

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"Students must develop skills in reading, writing, speaking, computing and critical thinking. ... They also must learn about cultures and environments - their own and those of others with whom they share the earth. Students, therefore, must study social studies, literature, languages, the arts, mathematics and science."

—Title 70 Oklahoma Statutes 11-103.6

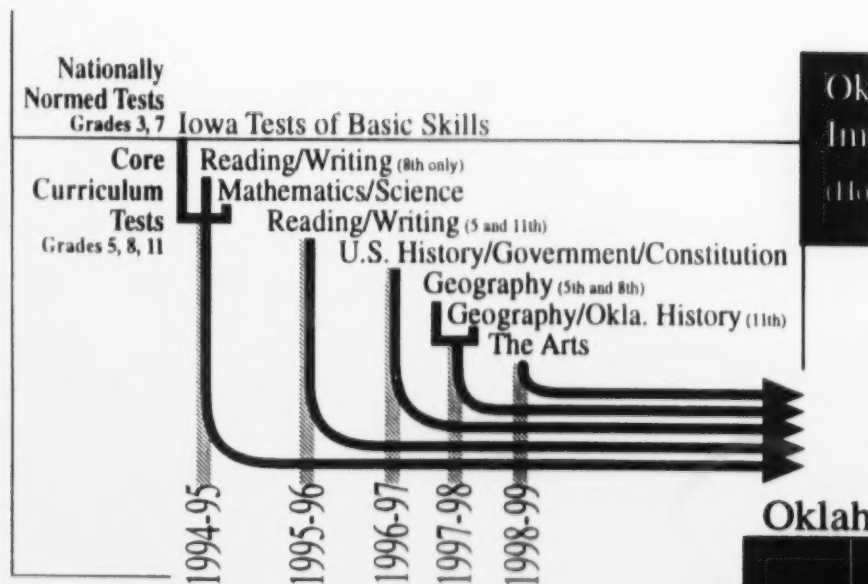
BASIC SKILLS CURRICULUM

Oklahoma's core curriculum, the foundation of local curriculum frameworks, is outlined in the Priority Academic Student Skills document provided to each teacher. It can also be accessed via the World Wide Web (<http://sde.state.ok.us/>).

The implementation of this basic curriculum provides continuity for students who move from one school district to another as it defines what is expected to be learned at each grade level.

The core curriculum was established with rigorous standards and the input and review of more than a thousand Oklahomans. It is currently undergoing its second review and revision as required by law.

Tests which measure students' knowledge of the core curriculum are being implemented on schedule; these tests were expanded by legislation in 1995 and 1996 to include content covering Oklahoma history and the U.S. Constitution. Additionally, the continued use of nationally normed tests provides broad indicators of student performance.



Detailed analyses of student performance in each of the basic skill areas are provided to parents, students and educators. Students who do not perform satisfactorily on the core curriculum tests must be offered remediation and take the tests again the following year.

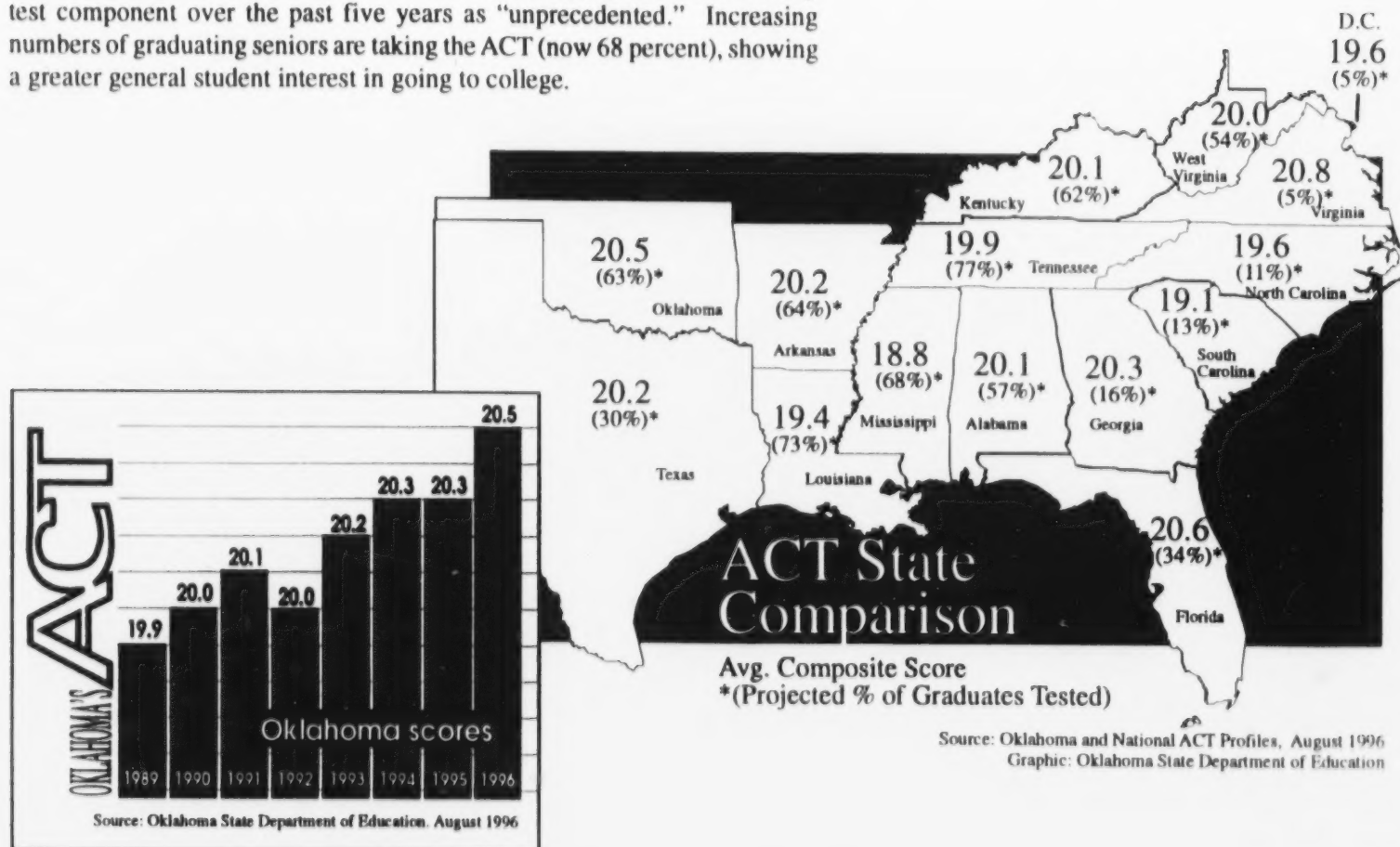
Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test Results

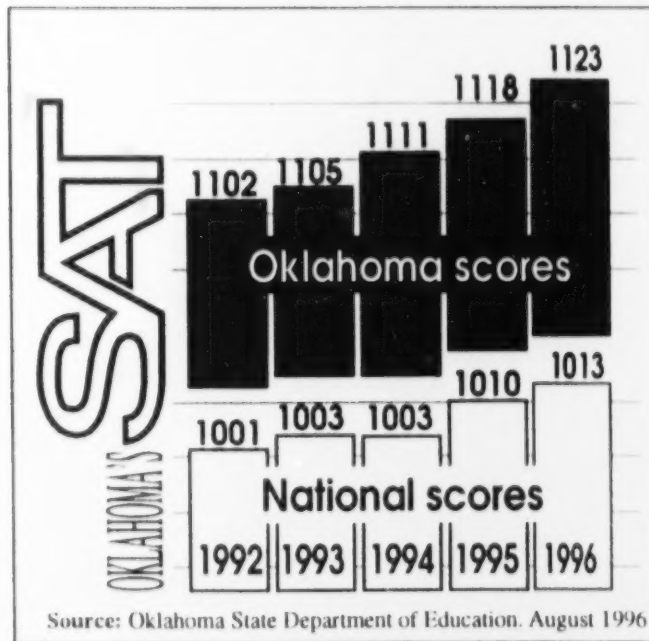
Grade	Subject	1995 Percent Tested Satisfactory	1996 Percent Tested Satisfactory
5	Science	79%	78%
8		75%	78%
11	12th Grade Test	70%	71%
5	Mathematics	79%	77%
8		70%	74%
11	12th Grade Test	56%	59%
5	Reading	—	76%
8		70%	70%
11	12th Grade Test	—	73%
5	Writing	—	95%
8		88%	94%
11	12th Grade Test	—	87%

Source: Student Assessment Section, State Department of Education, September 1996

ACCOUNTABILITY BENCHMARKS

Oklahoma's increase in its average composite on the American College Testing (ACT) program's college entrance exam outpaced the gains in the national average in 1996; ACT officials hail these statewide increases in every test component over the past five years as "unprecedented." Increasing numbers of graduating seniors are taking the ACT (now 68 percent), showing a greater general student interest in going to college.

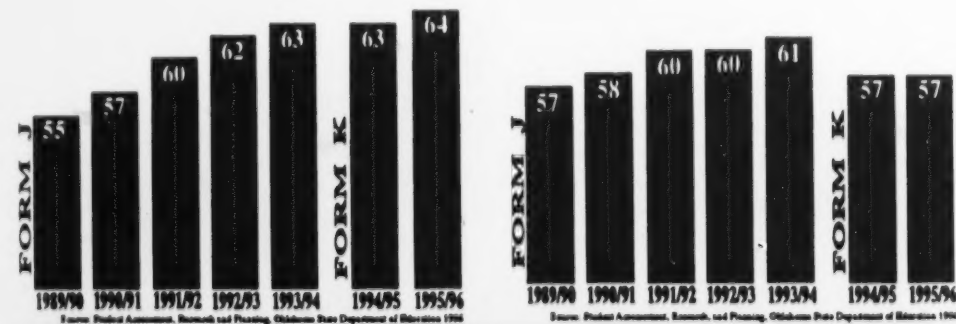


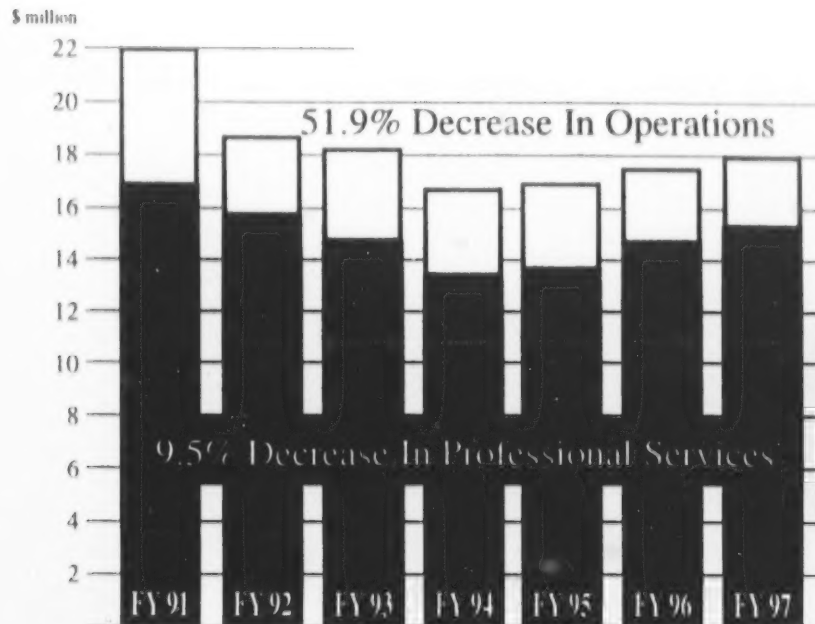


The average composite Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score is significantly above the national average and the highest it has been in 12 years.

Average percentile rankings on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills continue to improve in Grade 3 at the 64th percentile and remain steady in Grade 7 at the 57th percentile. Seven years of increasing achievement test scores at the elementary level seem to correlate to the mandatory kindergarten, lower class size and other reforms targeted at the early grades. While scores generally decline with a change in the form (or framework) of such a test, this was not the case in 1995 and 1996 for the third graders, and the initial performance level has been maintained for seventh graders.

Increasing numbers of students are scoring satisfactorily on the state's core curriculum tests as new content-areas are added. [Results are on page 7.]





Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, October 1996

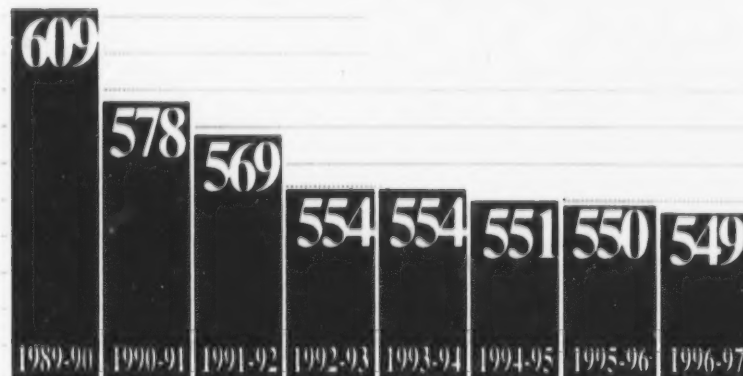
RIGHT SIZING

While funding for schools has increased, the State Department of Education has downsized its budget by almost 20 percent, saving taxpayers more than \$25 million over the past seven years.

Annual Budget for the State Department of Education

Overall Savings: \$25,901,570 (Overall Decrease: 19.6%)

Oklahoma's elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education restructured the Department to better serve schools, students and parents and provide the necessary regulation, opportunities for deregulation and needed leadership for reform.



School Consolidation

Total of Oklahoma's School Districts

Deregulation Requests Approved

By the State Board of Education

1!

1992-93

1993-94

1994-95

1995-96

1996-97

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, January 1997

INNOVATION VIA DEREGULATION

Education's focus on accountability and the State Department of Education's issuance of state report cards on various indicators have been coupled with increased flexibility in management of schools. Opportunities for innovation have increased with the State Board of Education's 1992 declaration that all rules are eligible for deregulation except those pertaining to health and safety.

To date, 394 such applications have been approved for activities ranging from schools sharing superintendents to those beginning Saturday schools. The state Legislature in 1996 passed legislation which allows waivers of certain laws to provide even greater flexibility for schools; one such statutory waiver has been requested and approved to date.

A number of State Board of Education regulations have been modified or deleted by the Board in recent years. More rules are expected to be repealed in the near future based on experience with deregulated opportunities and statutory waivers.

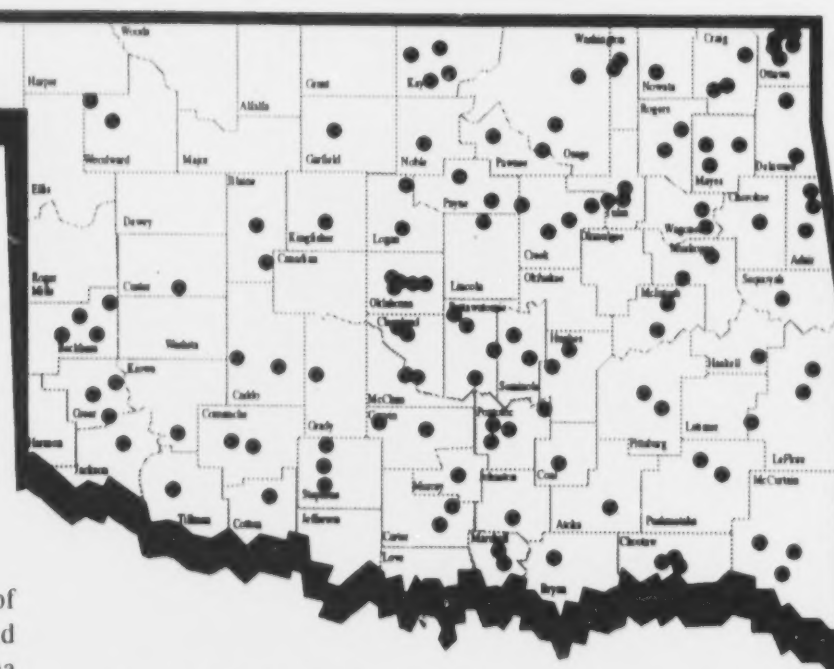
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Oklahoma has made great strides in recent years in providing alternative education programs for students through 27 alternative education academy grants. Because of the success of this legislated initiative and other alternative education grants, a statewide alternative education plan has been developed which includes programs being made available for all students by the year 2000. Currently there are 155 such programs.

Alternative Education

Grants include:

- 8 urban academies
- 9 mid-size academies
- 10 small academies
- 92 statewide academies
- 14 one-year grants
- 22 high-challenge grants
- 155 programs



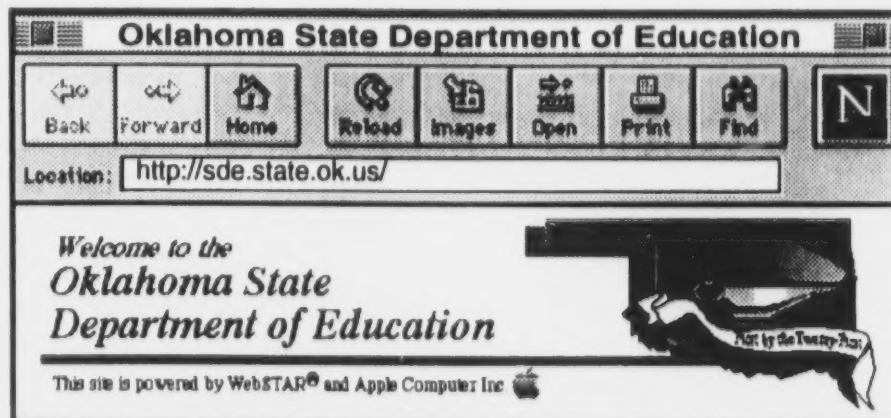
The State Department of Education, Office of Juvenile Affairs, State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Oklahoma Arts Council, Oklahoma Association of Youth Services, Inc. and the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center work collaboratively to implement House Bill 2692 (1996) and related laws.

Source: State/Federal Relations, State Department of Education; October 1996

1982	1983 - 1993	1994	1995	1996
1982	Pilot programs funded [SB 452]			
1983-93	Grants annually awarded to school districts and cooperatives on a competitive basis			
1994	Long-term funding provided Alternative Academies for eight schools in urban areas with high numbers of dropouts and referrals to the Juvenile Justice system of the Office of Juvenile Affairs [HB 2640]			
1995	Alternative Academy program expanded to include 19 mid-sized and small schools [HB 1764]			
1996	Five-year plan developed to enable all Oklahoma schools to offer Alternative Education programs as required by law by the 2000-2001 school year. [HB 2692]			

TECHNOLOGY

The State Department of Education recently unveiled its World Wide Web site. Additionally, the Department is coordinating leadership training for its staff and has conducted general Internet training utilizing the tools businesses use for cost-effectiveness and administrative efficiency. Web Day '96, a half-day training session, was hosted at 18 locations around the state and was attended by some 450 of Oklahoma's public school administrators. The web site assists educators and students in finding resources to use as supplements in classroom instruction. Anyone can access the site to find a number of resources and information related to Oklahoma schools.



CHARACTER EDUCATION

State Superintendent Sandy Garrett has provided leadership to schools with the goal of implementing community-designed character education programs for children and, as such, a brighter future for their communities. These programs incorporate traditional elements of good character such as responsibility, respect, honesty, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, caring and kindness into the school day. Superintendent Garrett calls character education the "missing link" in school reform.

COORDINATED EFFORTS

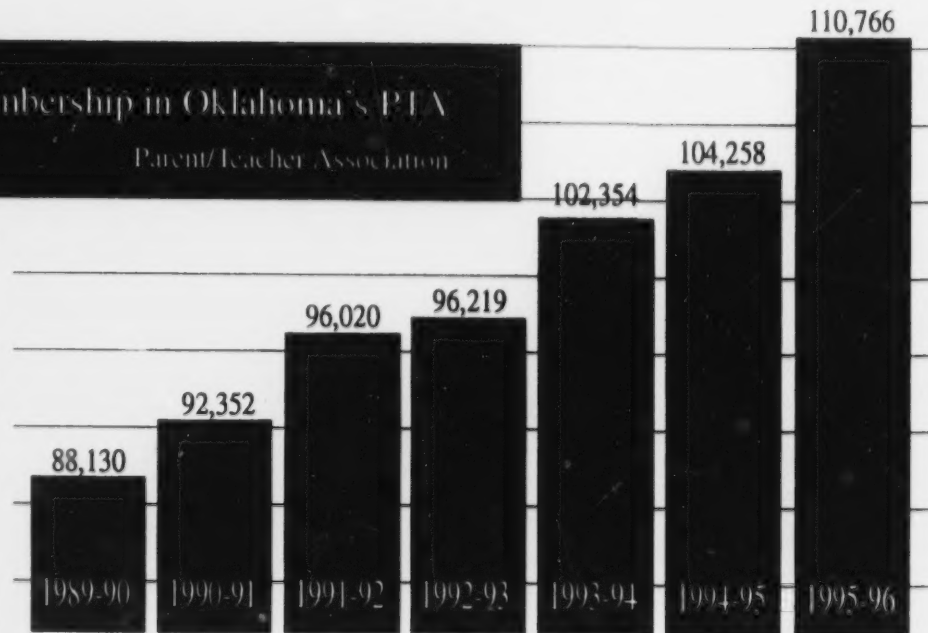
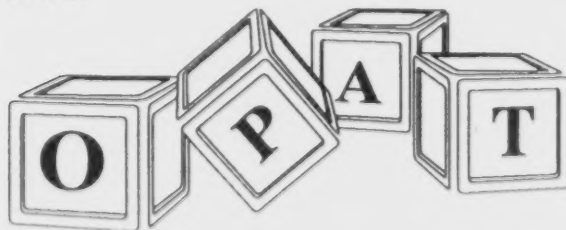
A strong working relationship among common education, vocational-technical education and higher education continues to produce results. The Five-Point Education Plan was presented in 1996 to focus future efforts on student success, accountability, economic development, technology and increased state and local partnerships. A pamphlet detailing the plan was published and distributed; a joint report card is in the process of being developed.

Membership in Oklahoma's PTA

Parent/Teacher Association

The implementation of such successful legislated programs as SoonerStart (the Early Intervention program for developmentally disabled infants and toddlers), parent education programs such as Oklahoma Parents As Teachers (services for parents of children birth to age 3), the Alternative Education Academies, and other such collaborative efforts are ongoing and building in their successes.

In addition, reforms have been implemented to help foster parental involvement including community use of school buildings, encouraging Department of Human Services' clients to enroll their children in early childhood programs and mandatory teacher inservice training in multicultural considerations and parent outreach efforts.



Source: Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA), 1996

Key to community involvement, indeed to all components of Oklahoma's public school system, are the 2,700 locally elected school board members. The State Department of Education and the Oklahoma State School Boards Association work together in sponsoring continuing education and new school board member workshops.

TOWARD THE YEAR 2000:

Oklahoma has a proud public school heritage — one based in practice and in law on decision-making at the local level. The State Department of Education continues to focus on empowering the local school board and administrators to provide quality services for Oklahoma's boys, girls and young adults. Local control is being strengthened every day through further deregulation, opportunities for statutory waivers and increased community involvement. The next logical steps in Oklahoma's education reform efforts are enactment of a charter school law, expansion of alternative education programs to all schools and increased use of technological tools for student learning, professional development of educators and more efficient administration of schools.

Oklahomans continue to reap great dividends from the investments they are making in their schools each day: investments of time, effort and necessary funding. They are also investing their ideas, which are welcomed at the State Department of Education. Citizens wishing to send constructive ideas to Superintendent Garrett may do so by writing the Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105-4599, sending electronic mail (sgarrett@phoenix.osrhe.edu), or calling (405) 521-3301.

Sandy Garrett, State Superintendent
Oklahoma State Department of Education



INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA

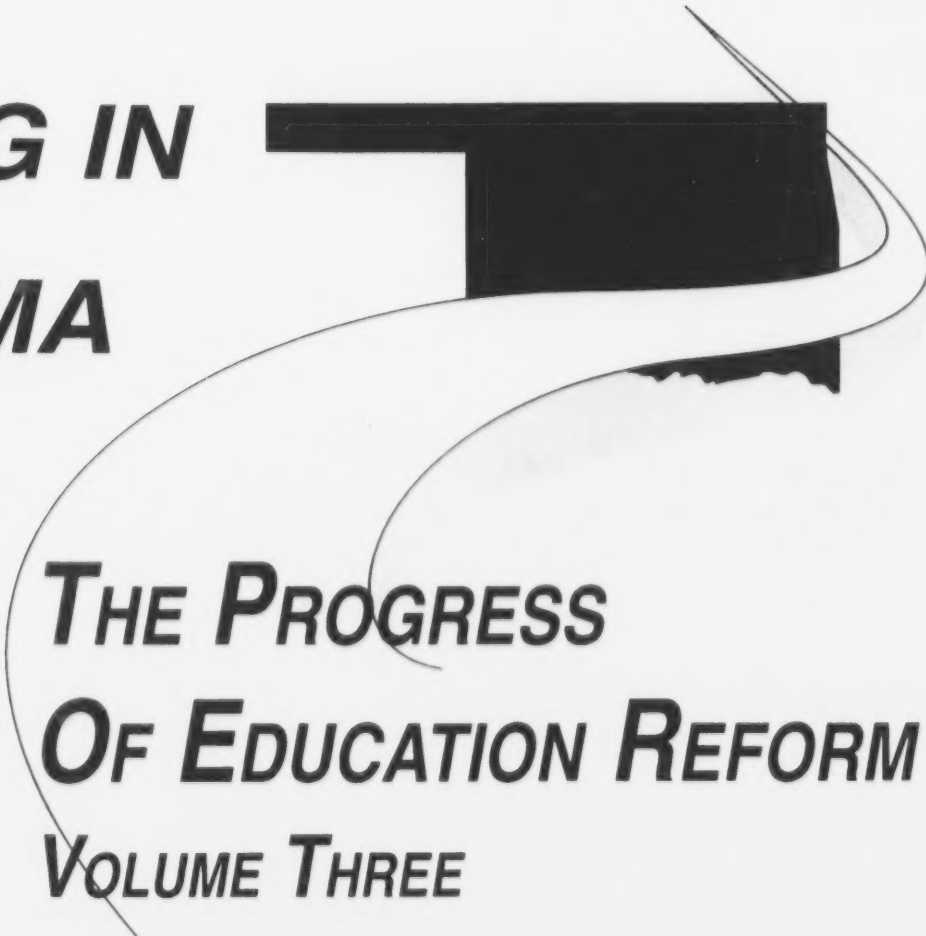
THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME THREE

SANDY GARRETT
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
APRIL 1998



EA 029337 - v.3

INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA



THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME THREE

REPRINT

This publication, printed by the State Department of Education Printing Services, is issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Education as authorized by Sandy Garrett, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. One thousand copies have been prepared at a cost of 81 cents per copy. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. MAY 1998

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Oklahoma State Department of Education

2500 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4599

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Investing In Oklahoma, Volume Three





April 29, 1998

Citizens of Oklahoma
Governor Frank Keating
Senate President Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor
Speaker of the House Loyd Benson

This is a chronicle of school improvement in Oklahoma starting with the passage of the state's landmark education reform legislation in 1990 and continuing with the many additional reform initiatives. This report seeks neither to simply repeat the progress noted in the two prior volumes nor to neglect updating important indicators regarding implementation of the various reforms.

Oklahoma's first comprehensive and long-term school reform effort is eight years old. If our journey represented the life of a child, we would be in third grade and perhaps taking state-mandated achievement tests for the first time. We have been hard at work these years and are soon to complete the implementation phase of the assessments which monitor the results. There is still much to do. While the challenges facing schools seem overwhelming at times and though we have accomplished much during this decade of education reform, we cannot rest — we cannot be deterred from our mission now or in the future.

Highlights from the report:

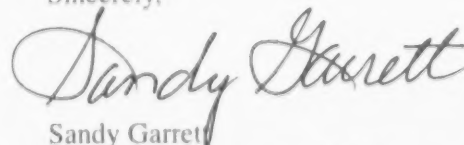
- Investment in public schools in the 1990s has greatly increased state appropriations to our severely underfunded schools. Since some communities have seen local funds diminish during this decade for many reasons and other states have also made substantial investments — we are still near the bottom in terms of financial support of our schools (47th in per-pupil expenditures). We can be proud that we have been able to accomplish so much — lower class sizes, stronger accreditation standards, higher academic standards, and increasing numbers of better prepared teachers.
- Close to 70 percent of Oklahoma's graduating high school seniors, compared to 36 percent nationally, took the ACT college entrance exam in 1997; just 56.8 percent of Oklahoma students took the ACT in 1989. Not only does this indicate that more students are considering postsecondary education, it makes Oklahoma's "unprecedented increase" (per ACT officials) in our average composite score (19.9 in 1989 to 20.6 in 1997) even more impressive.

- Oklahoma students have outperformed those in most southern states on the ACT, and improvement in scores has outpaced the national average in recent years. All students should complete at least the ACT-recommended core curriculum or more, which is why we have suggested incentives to accomplish this goal. According to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the number of Oklahoma freshmen entering college needing remediation continues to decline. It's a fact: More high school graduates are better prepared for college today than in 1994.
- More of our citizens and community leaders across the state have joined the ranks and become "Reader Leaders." By conducting reading audits at schools and focusing on professional development of educators in phonics instruction, our schools are increasing their efforts to ensure every boy and girl in every school, in every town, learns to read. Educators are contacting me weekly with their "Reading First Initiative" plans and results. One of the benefits of this initiative has been community members rallying additional support for reading and providing books for young children to take home.
- Oklahoma is rapidly developing a system of alternative education like no other in the country. More than 8,800 students were served in 1996-97 (an average of 11.3 percent were recovered dropouts and 33.3 percent were self-reported juvenile offenders) and another 1,039 students were on waiting lists. Nearly 800 alternative education students graduated from high school in 1997. The projected, positive economic impact — in terms of income and other taxes graduates will pay in their lives, and unemployment compensation, welfare and other government services not needed — is \$64,619,000, according to the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center in Cushing.

With one in four Oklahoma children living in poverty, the second highest divorce rate in the nation, and one of the top incarceration rates, the path before us is clear: We must work even harder, and smarter, to meet the needs of boys and girls today. We have the duty and, yes, the responsibility to prepare students for the challenges they will face as adults. We must arm them with the ability to read, an education which integrates the elements of good character, and better opportunities to reach their highest potentials.

School reform is truly an ongoing process. Yet, it is the return we are seeing on the investment which is having the greatest impact on the state. The following report provides benchmarked data upon which to evaluate Oklahoma's investment in the education of its people and the progress the state is making. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at (405) 521-3301.

Sincerely,



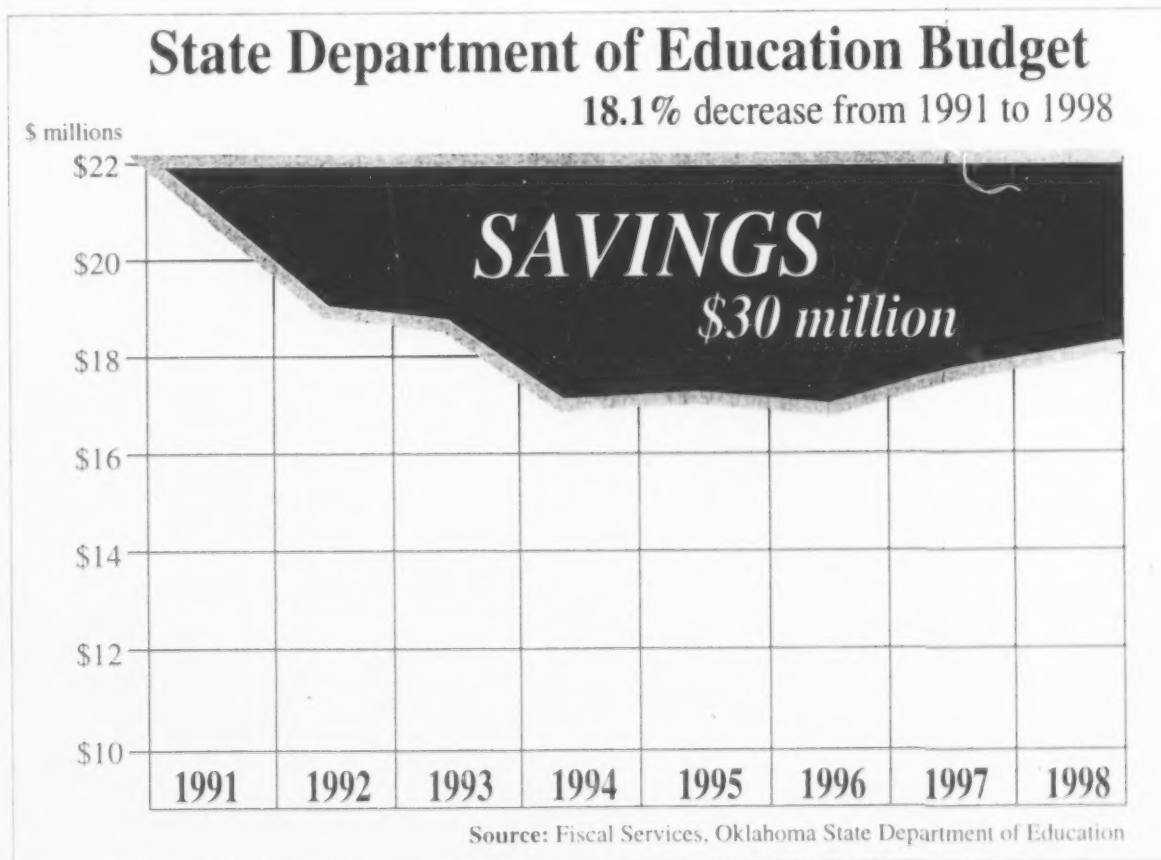
Sandy Garrett
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Introduction

To focus the State Department of Education (SDE) on meeting the needs of children and implementing reforms, State Superintendent Sandy Garrett restructured the SDE and as a result saved nearly \$30 million. Upon taking office in 1991, she cut 130 staff positions. Through attention to results, use of technology for business efficiency and a new commitment to customer service, the SDE has helped educators implement reform mandates on time and within budget.

The cumulative savings to taxpayers, \$29,887,306, represents an overall reduction in the state education agency's budget of 18.1 percent when compared with the Fiscal Year 1991 budget—a 9.3 percent reduction in personnel services and 46.2 percent in operations.

Still, as Superintendent Garrett says, "It is the return we are seeing on the investment in students which is having the greatest impact on the state." The report that follows focuses on the progress of education reform and the status of the state's investment.



Benchmarks

On an average day in Oklahoma:

615,612 students	15.1% are American Indian,
are in public	1.3% are Asian/Pacific Islander,
school classrooms	10.5% are Black,
in 547 school	4.3% are Hispanic, and
districts.	68.8% are White.

About 71,000 of Oklahoma public school students are served in special education classes, nearly 32,000 are identified locally as speaking a language other than English, and more than 8,800 are being served in alternative education programs at all grade levels. One in four Oklahoma children live in poverty; 46 percent qualify for free and reduced-price meals.



These are the boys and girls and young adults in whom Oklahoma invests and these facts provide background upon which any benchmarks of state progress must be evaluated. A number of "report cards" have developed in the 1990s.

Parents, students and educators annually receive the results of standardized tests taken each spring at the various grade levels — some mandated in state law since 1986 and others required locally. While these are the best benchmarks (in terms of history of data, accuracy and objectivity) available to policy makers and citizens, comparing schools within states or comparing state education systems are not what these tests were designed to do. They were designed to help teachers and parents better serve individual students.

Probably the most widely known national test is the American College Test (ACT), the college-entrance exam required for admission to state universities. It was taken by nearly 70 percent of Oklahoma's class of 1997, as compared to 36 percent nationally. As a benchmark, the ACT is considered one of the best measures of the cumulative results of K-12 schooling in Oklahoma. The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) is taken by about 8 percent of students, most planning to go to out-of-state colleges and universities.

A national achievement test selected through competitive bids every five years, (currently the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, ITBS) is given annually to 3rd and 7th grade students. By law, the results of these norm-referenced tests are used to determine low-performing and high-challenge elementary and middle schools. The Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests, criterion-referenced tests designed to measure the state's mandated curriculum, are required by state law to be taken in Grades 5, 8 and 11.

All of these tests are scored differently, by different testing companies and on different scales. This complicates matters of analysis but provides a multilevel set of benchmarks.

Results

Even though Oklahoma has twice the percent of graduating seniors being tested than the national average, the state average composite ACT score is 0.4 higher than it was five years ago and is very near the national average of 21.0.

Outpacing the Nation

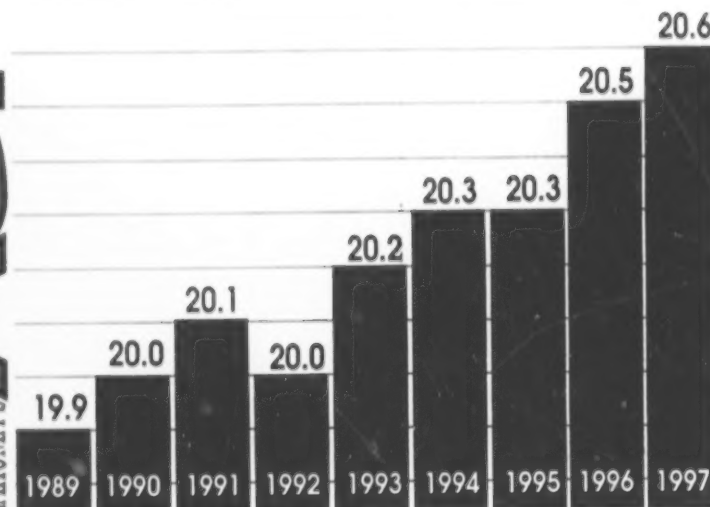
ACT
OKLAHOMA'S

COMPOSITE SCORES

ACT Southwest Region	Change in 5 years
National	+0.3
Texas	+0.1
Louisiana	-0.1
Arkansas	+0.2
New Mexico	+0.3
Oklahoma	+0.4

Source: "ACT Assessment, 1997 Results", American College Testing Program, August 1997
Graphic: Oklahoma State Department of Education

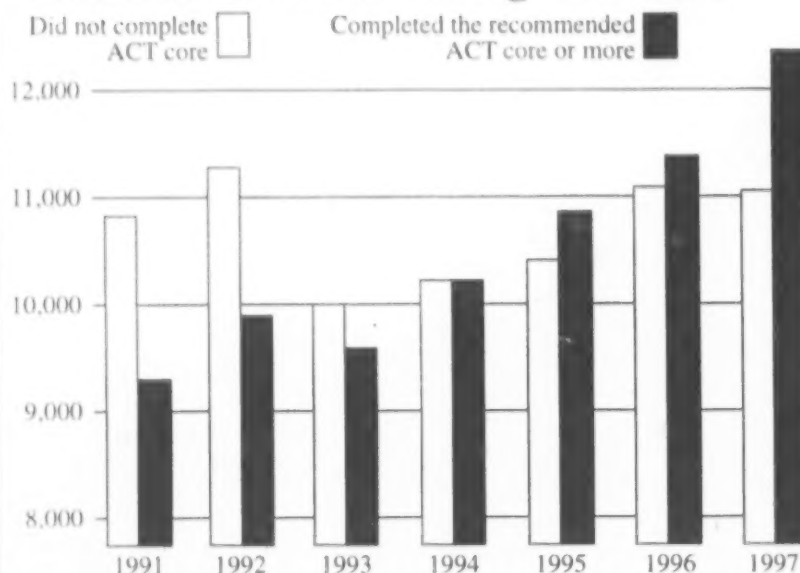
ACT
OKLAHOMA'S



Source: "ACT Assessment, 1997 Results", American College Testing Program, August 1997
Graphic: Oklahoma State Department of Education

Remediation needs of college students are determined by subject area scores on the ACT in English, reading, mathematics and science. The percent of Oklahoma students identified as needing remedial courses was 34 percent in 1996 — down from 42 percent two years before and 38 percent in Fall 1995, according to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Of those scoring below the Regents' benchmark, 33.1 percent of them were weak in mathematics compared to 3.6 percent in reading.

Oklahoma Students Taking ACT Core



American College Testing (ACT) program suggested core curriculum:

4 years English

3 years Mathematics (1 year Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and 1/2 year Trigonometry, Calculus, Computer Mathematics/Computer Science and/or other courses beyond Algebra II)

3 years Social Studies (1 year American History, World History, American Government, 1/2 year Economics, Geography, Psychology, and/or other History)

3 years Science (1 year General/Physical/Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry and/or Physics)

Source: "ACT Assessment 1997 Results," ACT, August 1997
Graphic: Oklahoma State Department of Education, October 1997

The increasing percent of graduating high school seniors taking the ACT college entrance exam (from 56.8 percent in 1989 to nearly 70 percent in 1997) indicates that more students are considering postsecondary education, and it makes Oklahoma's increase in its composite score even more impressive.

The most important trend apparent in the data is the fact that more test-takers complete the ACT-recommended core courses than do not. Academic advisement toward rigorous core courses in high school is key to student preparation for success in adult life. Progress has been made toward this goal: Since 1992, the percent of school sites served by counselors has risen from 68 to 86 percent in 1997.

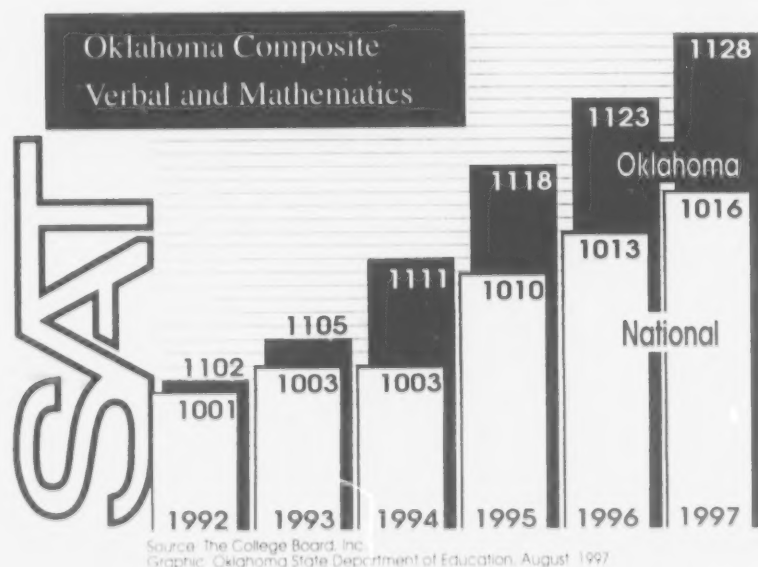
More must be done to educate students and parents on the skills required in the twenty-first century. Superintendent Garrett and the State Board of Education have proposed an Incentives for Academic Success program to financially reward schools which go beyond the call in helping students prepare for work and/or college by taking additional, rigorous core courses.

Oklahoma students raised their ACT English subject test score from 19.7 to 20.2 in five years, while the national average did not change. "You're closing that gap and are within striking distance of the national average. That is significant and something you ought to be celebrating."

—Carolyn Kostecky,
Southwest Regional Manager for ACT,
August 13, 1997.

Even in the absence of such an incentive, the state's students continue a trend of taking tougher courses. The Oklahoma Academic Scholars program recognizes outstanding achievement of graduating seniors. To receive the distinction on their diploma and transcript, students must (according to statute) have a 3.7 grade point average in Grades 9-12, complete 22 units of course work including four units of English, three units each of mathematics, science and social studies (or two units of social studies and two of the same foreign language), and achieve a 27 composite score on the ACT.

Teachers and counselors continue setting high expectations for students, and as a result more than 2,000 students will be recognized as Oklahoma Academic Scholars in 1998. As the program is



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, April 1998

voluntary, the number does not likely represent the actual number of all students who meet the requirements. In fact, 2,876 students achieved a 27 or more on the ACT in 1997.

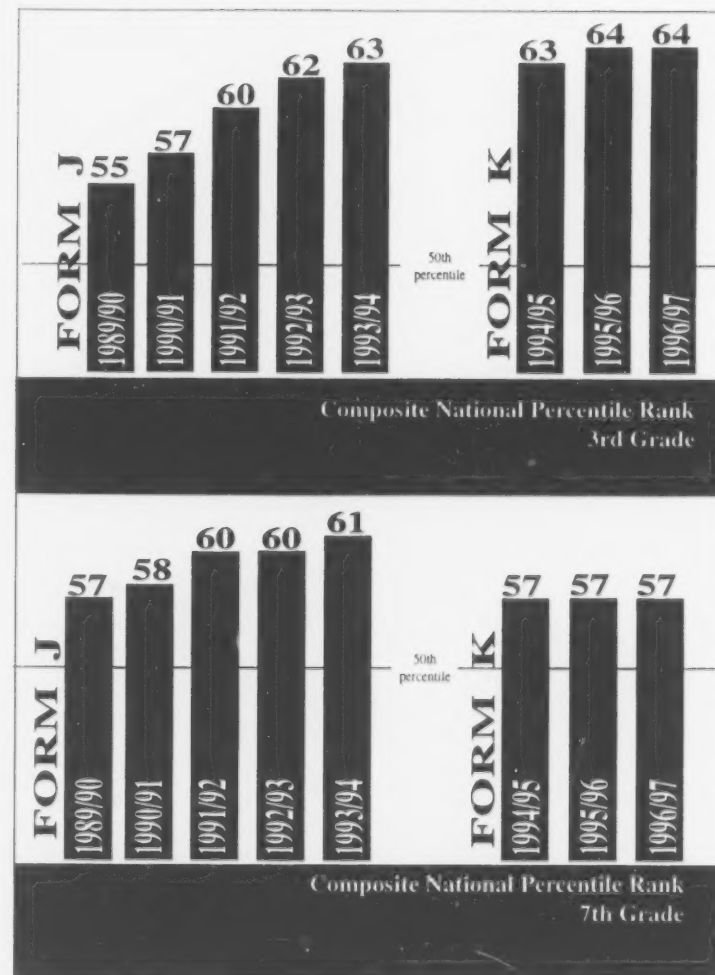
The state's average SAT composite score is 1128, up from last year and well above the national average of 1016.

Oklahoma's high SAT composite score is due in part to students taking rigorous courses. Increased rigor in all courses has been an important factor in the state's continued improvement. "It's not just a matter of taking more courses. It depends on what happens inside the courses."

—Martha Salmon, Executive Director for The College Board's Southwest Region, August 26, 1997.

An ITBS achievement test score is expressed in terms of the National Percentile Rank (NPR). Students are compared to a national sampling of student test results at the time the test is written, which is within five years of it being given. The 50th percentile is considered to be the national average.

Oklahoma third graders, showing the most impact from the early grade focus of 1990's reform legislation, scored at the 64th percentile for the second year. Seventh graders scored at the 57th percentile for the third year. Contrary to a widely circulated myth, all states DO NOT score above the national average (50th percentile) on this type of test. For example, in 1996, New Mexico had a third grade average score on the ITBS at the 47th percentile; Mississippi's fourth grade average was at the 45th percentile; and Arizona's fourth graders were at the 49th percentile.



In Grades 5, 8 and 11, the Core Curriculum Test results are reported in terms of the percent of students scoring in the satisfactory range. The satisfactory level or benchmark is determined by the State Board of Education as outlined in law.

Students scoring unsatisfactorily must be offered remediation and take the test again to monitor progress and guide educators. The test given at Grade 11 is based by law on the knowledge expected of students by the end of the 12th grade. This allows some time for remediation prior to graduation.

Detailed skills data from these tests are used by the State Department of Education to develop continuing education workshops for teachers. The percentage of students scoring satisfactorily during the implementation phase of the new testing program is shown here.

Grade	Subject	1995 Percent tested Satisfactory	1996 Percent tested Satisfactory	1997 Percent tested Satisfactory	1998 Percent tested Satisfactory	1999 Percent tested Satisfactory
5 8 11*	Science	79% 75% 70%	78% 78% 71%	81% 77% 72%		
5 8 11*	Mathematics	79% 70% 56%	77% 74% 59%	80% 72% 58%		
5 8 11*	Reading	— 70% —	76% 70% 73%	77% 72% 75%		
5 8 11*	Writing	— 88% —	95% 94% 87%	95% 89% 94%		
5 8 11*	History/ Government	— — —	— — —	71% 58% 74%		
5 8 11*	Geography/ Okla. History	— — —	— — —	— — —	Starts Spring 1998	
5 8 11*	The Arts	— — —	— — —	— — —		Starts Spring 1999

**Oklahoma
Core Curriculum
Test Results**

*12th grade test given in 11th grade

Source: State Department of Education, 1997

Reform

In July 1997, Superintendent Garrett issued an alert for all schools to focus on reading in all classes at all grade levels.

"As parents, policymakers and citizens," Garrett says, "we must make certain all students at all grade levels in every school can read.

Be a READER LEADER

As a longtime first-grade teacher, I know the importance of phonics to a balanced approach to teaching reading. As such, I have appointed a Phonics Task Force of exceptional elementary school teachers who are finalizing a guide for teachers on using phonics as part of reading instruction."

Oklahoma has been an active participant in National Young Readers' Day since 1990. The Department partners with the Oklahoma Reading Association and a number of public and private sponsors to host the Oklahoma Celebration of Reading, a series of reading contests and events held throughout each school year culminating in a major celebration event in April.

Another reform initiative was started four years ago when Superintendent Garrett termed character education the "missing link" to Oklahoma's education reform plans. Since that time many schools have embraced the concept and worked with their communities to implement a focus on the generally accepted elements of good character (e.g., caring, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness).

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In addition to reading instruction reform and character education, many school leaders are taking steps to build new or better Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings for their students. This program paves the way to a successful college career by offering students the opportunity to take advanced classes and examinations which can yield college credit while in high school.

Since the 1996 beginning of the Advanced Placement (AP) Incentives Program, 465 new classes have been formed, and 334 existing AP classes have been upgraded or expanded in Oklahoma high schools. In addition, exam fees were paid for 548 students in need; 1,219 registrations were paid for teachers to participate in AP training, and \$257,700 was paid to local districts for outstanding student scores (from the incentive portion of the allocated monies).

New Advanced Classes

Number of Advanced Placement Classes Added in Oklahoma Public Schools in 1997

Among 465 new classes added there were:

English	150 classes
Calculus	122 classes
Biology	87 classes
Chemistry	74 classes
Physics	66 classes
History, U.S. & European	59 classes
Art	52 classes

Plus 334 upgraded or expanded classes

[State Department of Education, School Improvement, Jan. 1998]

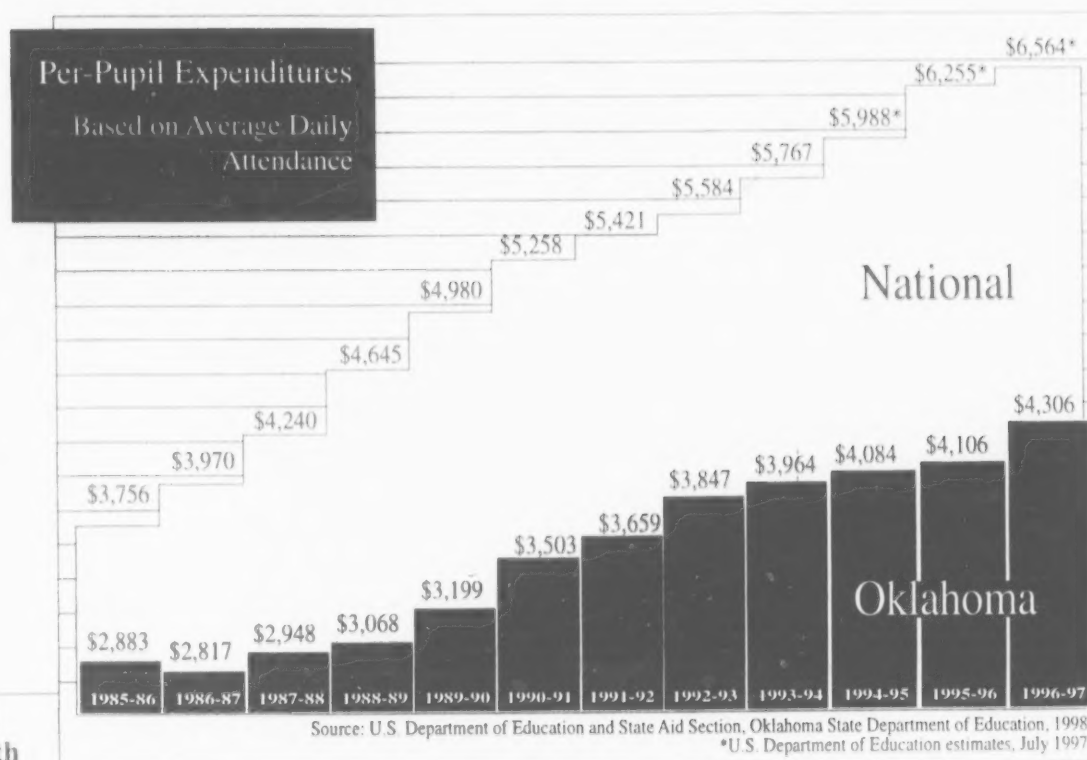
Progress on the various test-score indicators continues despite Oklahoma's near-the-bottom ranking in funding per student and teacher salaries, and near-the-top rankings in divorce, incarceration and teen pregnancy. Complicating matters in the classroom, the Office of Accountability reported one juvenile offender for every 41 students in the 1995-96 school year. Considering that nearly one quarter of Oklahoma children live in poverty and a similar percentage of adults never completed high school, Oklahoma's investment in public schools is more important than ever.

State appropriations to common education in the '90s have provided much-needed funds to support public schools and their students.

Percentage Change in Inflation-Adjusted Per-Pupil Expenditures (1996 dollars) with National Ranking for Regional States

State	Change in amount 1995-1996	Rank	Change in amount 1985-1996	Rank
National Average	0.3%		21.7%	
New Mexico	17.9%	1	49.9%	3
Kansas	1.3%	23	17.9%	33
Texas	0.5%	30	19.8%	31
Arkansas	0.3%	31	-2.7%	46
Missouri	-1.9%	43	14.7%	35
Oklahoma	-4.0%	49	-3.0%	47

SOURCE: "Report Card on American Education 1996," by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), October 1997, Table 5, pg. 15



However, since many states have invested more — Oklahoma is still ranked 47th in terms of financial support of schools per student. When inflation is taken into account, per pupil spending was 3 percent lower in 1996 than 1985. Nonetheless, school board members, administrators, educators and patrons have been able to accomplish many of the reforms — lower class sizes, stronger accreditation standards, higher expectations and academic standards for students, and increasing numbers of better educated teachers.

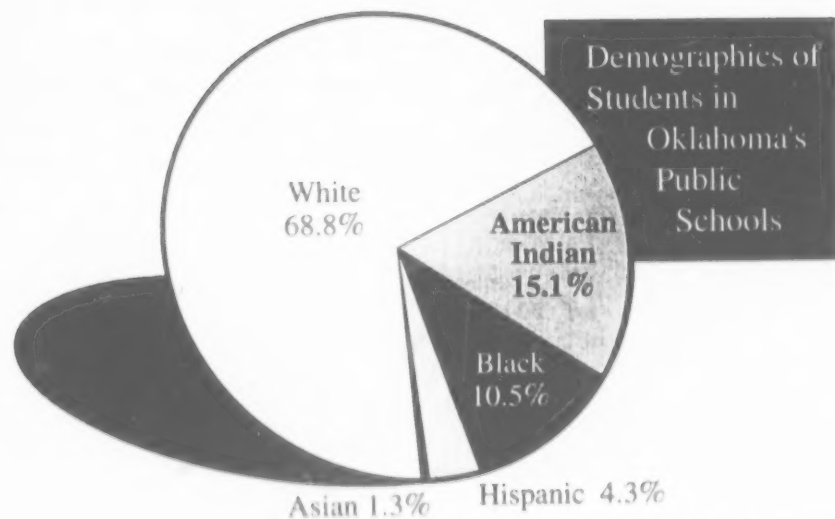
Rapid enrollment growth statewide has strained state resources. No matter how one counts students — October 1 snapshot of fall enrollment, average daily attendance or average daily membership — the public school population in Oklahoma has grown significantly. Compared to the benchmark year of 1989-90, there are 45,101 more in October 1 enrollment.

The ethnic composition of the school population has also changed over the years. Oklahoma has the largest American Indian population of any state. According to the 1990 Census, 13 percent of the nation's total Native American population resides in Oklahoma, from 39 recognized tribes.

On October 1, 1997, Oklahoma's public schools enrolled 96,425 American Indian students (up from 86,284 in 1996); 8,349 Asian/Pacific Islander students (up from 7,843 a year ago); 65,888 Black students (up from 64,435); 28,365 Hispanic students (up from 26,085); and 424,654 White/Non-Hispanic and other students (up from 414,763 a year ago).



Source: SDE Accreditation 1998

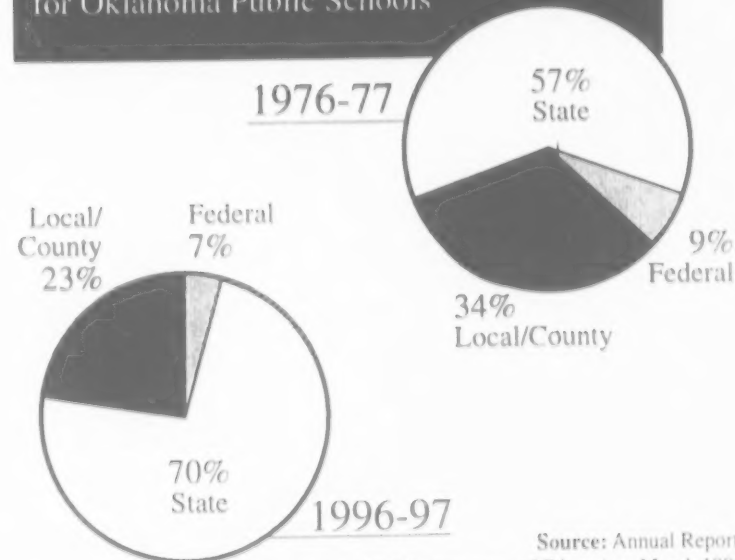


Source: State Department of Education, February 1998

Many students who are Asian, Hispanic or American Indian, live in homes where a language other than English is spoken. Often, these students either speak no English or are considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). Services, particularly federally funded teacher training programs, are provided to assist schools in teaching LEP students to be fluent in speaking and reading English.

The school funding formula has been calculated since 1980 based on weighted student counts, which include grade level weights, student category weights for special education, gifted, bilingual and economically disadvantaged, and factors for school district teacher index (based on college degrees and years of experience) and small school/isolation weights.

Funding Sources for Oklahoma Public Schools



Source: Annual Report, State Department of Education, March 1998

Comparison of

Raw Average Daily Membership (ADM),
Weighted Average Daily Membership and Per Capita
(or per pupil) Revenues for Public Schools

Year	Raw ADM	Weighted ADM	Per Pupil Rev/ Weighted ADM
1989-90	573,323.37	755,985.21	\$2,283
1995-96	612,093.68	889,804.98	\$2,710
1996-97	615,607.45	898,637.42	\$2,809
1997-98	622,192.24	912,864.77	not available

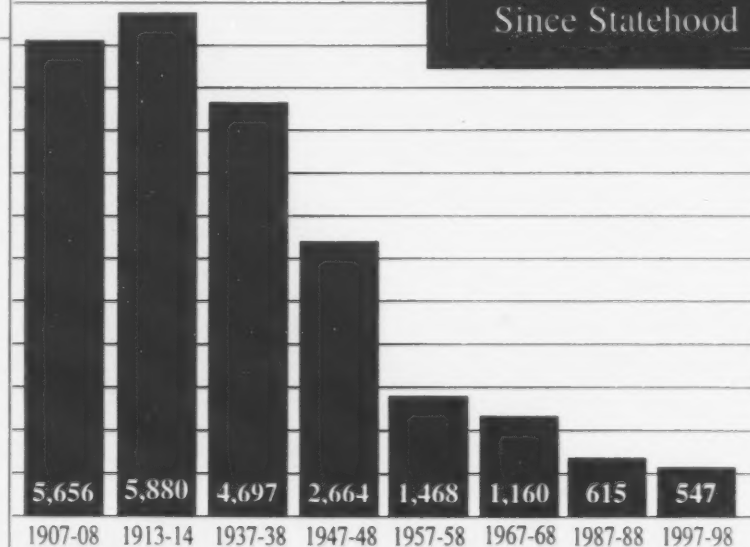
The average annual increase over the last five years has been 10,109.07 "weighted students," not counting four-year-old children. From 1989-1990 through 1996-1997, revenues to Oklahoma public schools have increased only \$526 per student in weighted average daily membership.

House Bill 2055, passed in 1996, brought about a new calculation of the state aid formula for funding schools. When the midyear allocation notices were mailed to schools in December 1997, Superintendent Garrett said, "This is the first time that funds are being provided to meet the needs of growing school districts during the year it occurs, rather than through a 'midterm supplement' allocated by the Legislature the following school year."

94

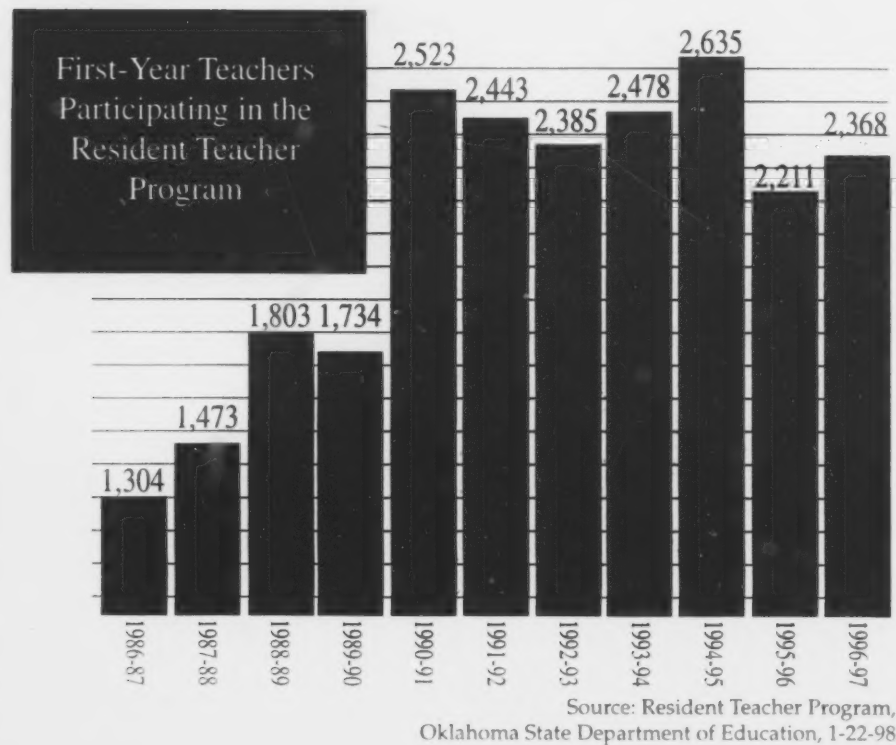
The number of school districts continues to decline. In 1914, Oklahoma had 5,880 school districts — the largest number since statehood when schools were located within walking distance of every child. Between 1947 and 1965, almost 3,300 schools were annexed or consolidated. Incentives provided in 1990 fostered renewed interest in consolidation, reducing the number of school districts by January 1998 to 547.

Number of School Districts Since Statehood



Source: "A History Outline: Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1900 to 1965, and Annual Reports since then; Graphic, March 1998

In order to comply with the class-size mandates of 1990, schools have hired additional teachers in large numbers and have passed bond issues to provide more classrooms. Class size has been one of the most costly reform mandates, yet it is regarded by teachers and policy makers in the state and nation as one of the most valuable.



University Status Report, 1996-97

Top Ten Universities participating in the Resident Teacher Program by rank order of Oklahoma graduates employed in Oklahoma schools:

1) Northeastern State University	478
2) University of Central Oklahoma	473
3) Oklahoma State University	244
4) East Central University	170
5) University of Oklahoma	157
6) Southwestern Oklahoma State University	134
7) Southeastern Oklahoma State University	123
8) Cameron University	91
9) University of Science & Arts of Oklahoma	74
10) Langston University	60

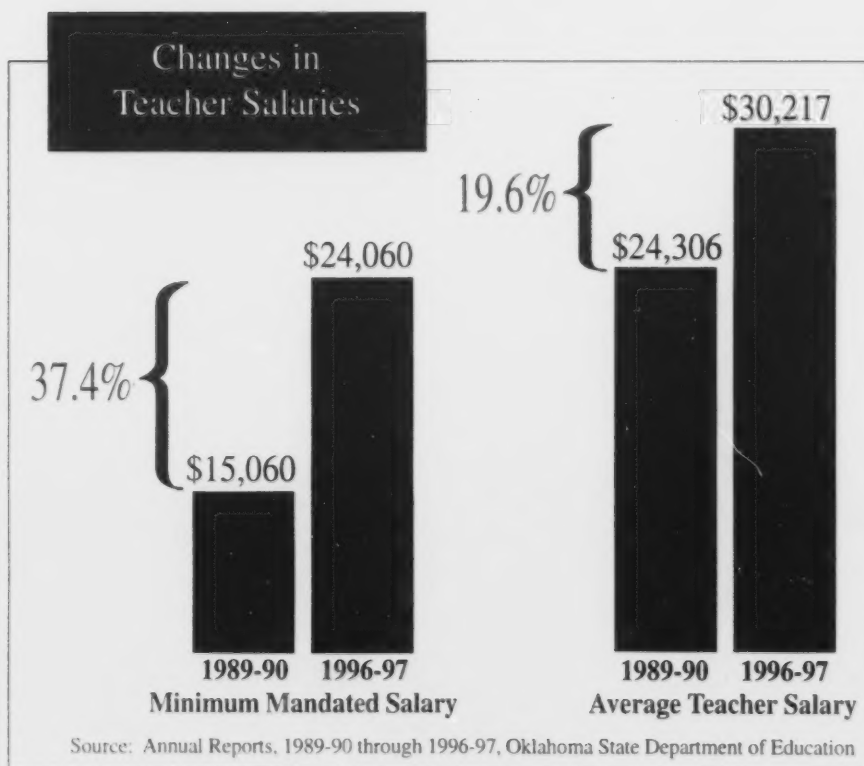
Source: Resident Teacher Program, Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1-22-98

Oklahoma is fortunate to have an 18-year history of providing a residency program (formerly called entry-year) for its professional educators. As such, the influx of new teachers during the early 1990s has not been without oversight. Since 1982, more than 29,000 teachers have participated in the Residency Program.

In addition, professional development (or continuing education) of teachers has been a priority for a number of years. Oklahoma legislators' commitment can be seen in the increase in funds allocated to schools for professional development activities: the Fiscal Year 1988 allocation was \$1.87 per student in average daily attendance (ADA); by comparison, ten years later, the 1998 allocation was \$7.44 per student in ADA.

Progress

The Legislature continues to build on the reforms of 1990. A good example is extension of the minimum teacher salary schedule from 15 to 25 years to include career teachers. While local school boards continue to provide as much compensation to teachers as they can, raising the minimum and providing funding to extend that minimum helps Oklahoma recruit quality teachers.



Quality Counts

High Academic Standards

Top 10 States	Score
1. Virginia	94
2. Georgia	93
3. Massachusetts	93
4. North Carolina	93
5. New York	92
6. Ohio	91
7. Florida	90
8. Maryland	90
9. Oklahoma	90
10. Texas	90

Quality of Teaching Standards

Top 10 States	Score
1. Oklahoma	91
2. Connecticut	88
3. Kentucky	87
4. Ohio	84
5. Indiana	81
6. West Virginia	81
7. Tennessee	80
8. North Carolina	79
9. California	79
10. Michigan	79

Source: *Education Week*, "Quality Counts" report, January 1998

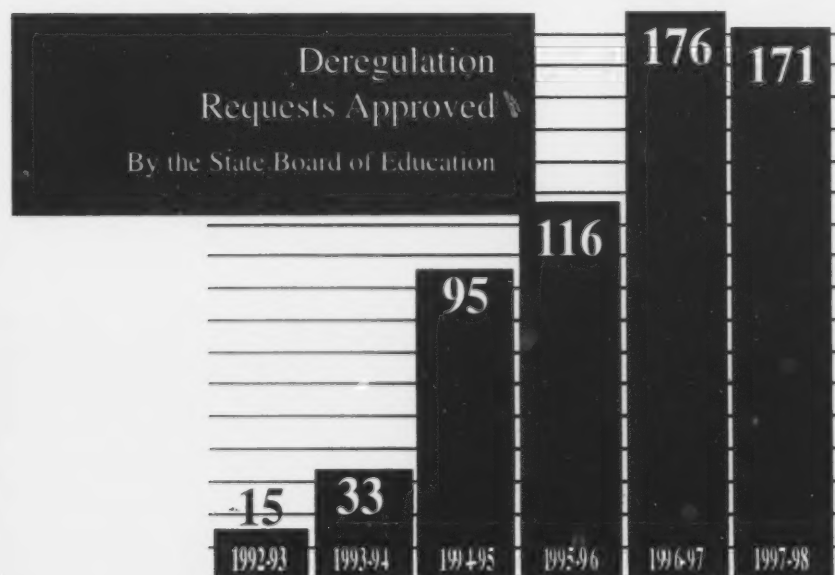
The focus in the '90s continues to be -- and must be -- on improving the average teacher salary in order to retain our most experienced and educated teachers. Surrounding states are bold and innovative and seem to have more money to offer when luring Oklahoma teachers away. For example, Fort Worth (Texas) Independent Schools are offering \$2,000 bonuses to teachers who sign contracts with them by June 1998.

The Alternative Placement Program is popular with applicants and school administrators. The number of Oklahomans certified as teachers this way grows each year. More than 1,900 degreed professionals with practical experience in their career fields are certified, and 911 are employed in schools today. One such teacher was even among the 12 finalists for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year in 1997.

This program, referred to as alternative certification, complements the federally funded Troops to Teachers Program, which assists recently active members of the U.S. armed forces and former civilian employees of the Departments of Defense and Energy to begin careers in public schools. The Troops to Teachers program

has an emphasis on serving Title I schools (those with high levels of students in poverty). The Department of Defense has provided nearly a million dollars to public schools to offset a portion of the participants' base salaries over a five-year period.

A multitude of public and corporate supporters have reached out to help make Oklahoma's State Teacher of the Year celebration an event worthy of the honor. According to the Council of Chief State School Officers, Oklahoma is now the top state in the nation in terms of what it offers its Ambassador of Teaching. Teacher of the Year sponsors, led by the State Fair of Oklahoma, provided more than \$7,000 in cash awards, the use of a new car, cellular phone and many other prizes in 1997.



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, March 1998

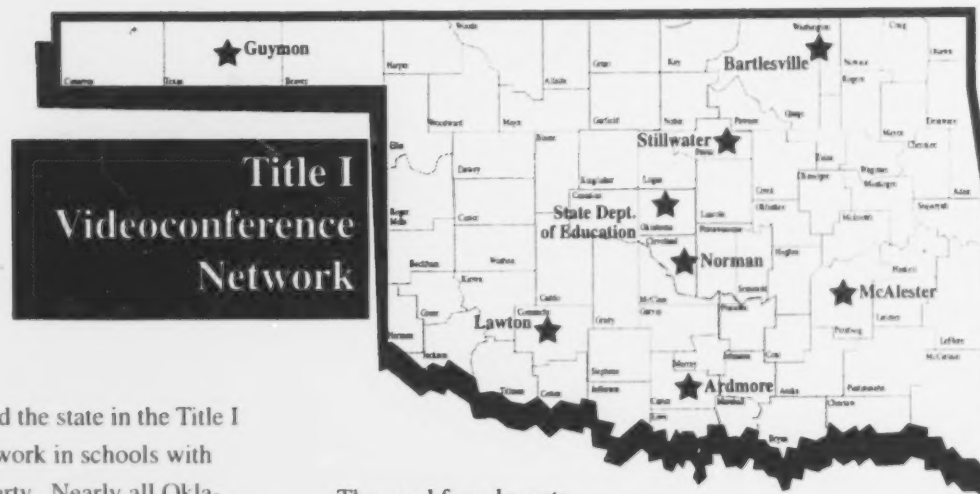
Innovation

Many districts have found innovative ways to increase student achievement through deregulation of state rules. Local control is clearly supported by the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education, which has approved more than 600 deregulation requests. The Board has significantly streamlined its rules in light of the information gained in allowing schools to be free from certain state regulations and even some state laws (via statutory waivers).

Through the use of Title I federal funds, eight videoconference sites were designed, built and, in February 1998, became operational. The interactive audio-video network brings technical assistance and professional development workshops more efficiently to teachers around the state in the Title I areas of reading and math. Teachers trained work in schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty. Nearly all Oklahoma school districts are served by Title I.

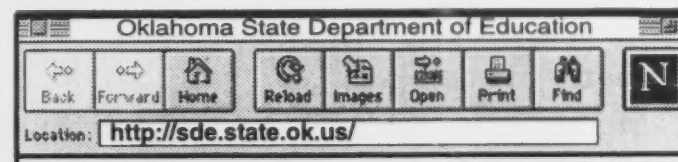
The U. S. Department of Education's director of Compensatory Education (Title I) reports that Oklahoma is the first state in the nation to have such a network built and operated with Title I funds, which had been earmarked for state administration.

"We thought it would be a better use of funds to build this infrastructure to provide training to teachers nearer to their districts than to invest in more administrators and travel costs," Superintendent Garrett said. "We are excited about the opportunities it affords us as technology once again lowers the barrier of distance."



The need for adequate technology to assist teachers and students as well as for more businesslike and cost-effective school administration is, for the most part, being addressed through local bond issues. Some state and federal grants have been made available, however, and the discounted telecommunications rate (the e-rate) for schools provided through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should be helpful. During the past year, the State Department of Education awarded \$8,676,526 in technology grants to 100 Oklahoma public schools from a 1996 court settlement and federal Title III grant funds.

Now on the World Wide Web:



Oklahoma Parents As Teachers (OPAT) Growth of Funding and Services

	FUNDING PER YEAR	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	FAMILIES SERVED
1991-92	\$650,000	13	377
1992-93	\$1,100,000	45	1,711
1993-94	\$1,600,000	75	3,005
1994-95	\$2,100,000	102	4,114
1995-96	\$1,959,144	99	4,063
1996-97	\$2,459,144	119	4,716
1997-98	\$2,459,144	118	5,000*

*projected estimate

Source: State Department of Education, March 1998

Oklahoma Parents as Teachers (OPAT) began in 1992 with 13 pilot projects. After six years of continued support, there are 118 programs serving 181 public schools and some 5,000 families. The program is free to all families with children from birth through 36 months of age who reside in participating school districts.

Of the 4,716 families served by OPAT in 1996-97, more than 60 percent had at least one of the following risk factors:

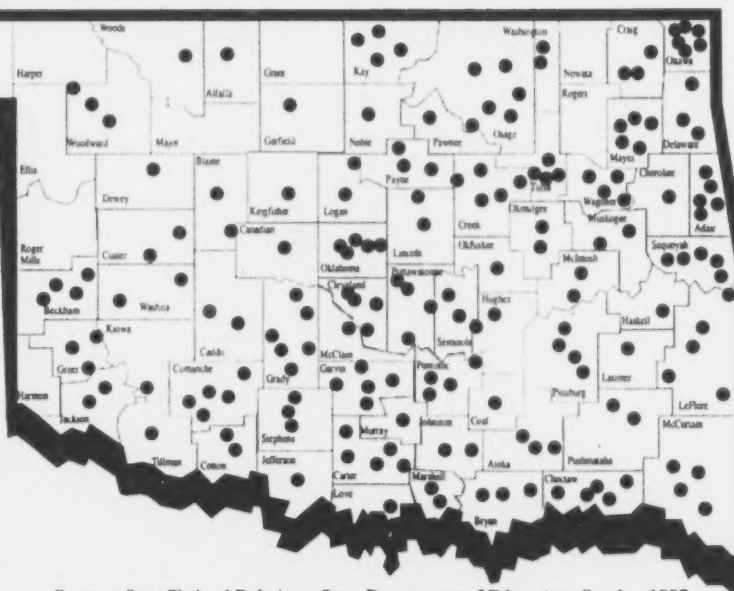
- single parents (28 percent),
- mother without a high school diploma (18 percent),
- families with no wage earners (17.7 percent) and
- teen parents (17 percent).

Public safety and welfare should always be among the state budget priorities but so should prevention. Oklahoma can reduce the societal costs of failure by preparing children from an early age for success in life.

A comprehensive dropout prevention program begins with intervention in the early grades and continues through Alternative Education Academies and alternative education programs in all schools. Through competitive grants to various sizes and locations of schools, the state is moving toward the year 2000 deadline for all schools to provide alternative education opportunities for students at risk of dropping out.

Grants include:
 9 mid-size academies
 10 small academies
 179 statewide academies
 15 one-year grants
 22 high-challenge grants

235 programs
in 1997-98



Source: State/Federal Relations, State Department of Education: October 1997

In 1996-97, more than 1,000 students were on waiting lists for alternative education programs. Of the nearly 9,000 served, an average of 11.3 percent were considered recovered dropouts and 33.3 percent were self-reported juvenile offenders. Among the 155 schools with programs in 1997, 799 students graduated from high school yielding an estimated \$64,619,000 positive economic impact on the state in terms of government services not expected to be needed by a high school graduate and considering taxes predicted to be paid in their lifetimes.

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The State Department of Education also provides programs in schools statewide for more than 26,000 educationally disadvantaged adults through its Adult Basic Education efforts. Forty-two Adult Learning Centers with more than 500 teachers are operated statewide. New programs include a work force development program for workers at their job location; "Job-Link," an educational program for unemployed and underemployed citizens, and "Family Literacy," an

Through contracts with the Department of Human Services, literacy instruction is provided for welfare clients to help them leave public assistance. The number of adults removed from public assistance with the help of Lifelong Learning programs, is up from 206 in Fiscal Year 1994 to 316 two years later, with a total of 1,091 since the program began. More than 11,300 people took the GED (General Educational Development) tests in 1997 at 48 GED Testing Centers statewide; 8,002 GED certificates were issued.

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Needs

The State Board of Education's legislative proposals for 1998 outline current and future needs of public school students in order to continue the progress. Proposals fall into five main funding categories: Incentives for Academic Excellence, Preparing for the Future, Dropout Prevention/At-Risk Intervention, Services and Accountability, and Unfunded Mandates.

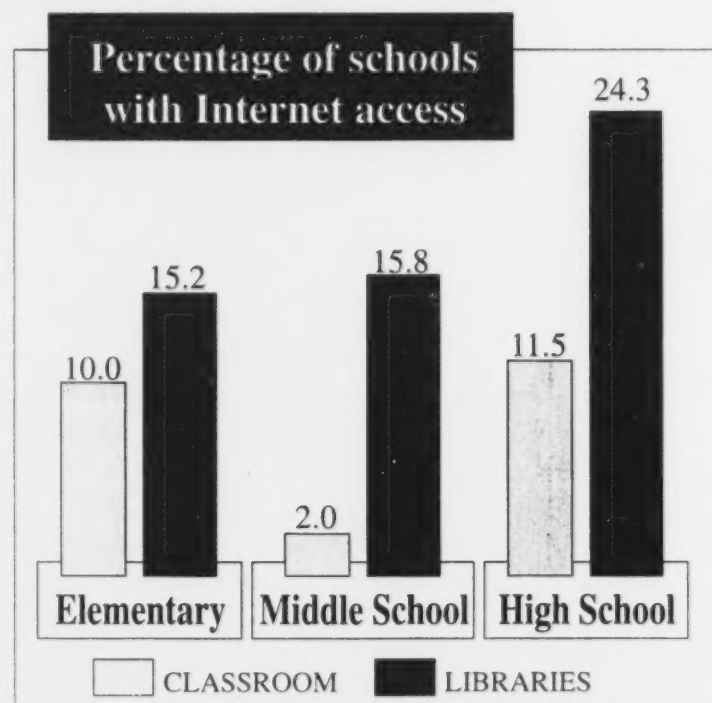
Incentives proposed are targeted at fostering better academic advisement — encouraging students to pursue a more rigorous course of study through high school. In terms of preparing for the future, the state must make modern wiring and adequate technological capabilities for schools a higher priority. A recent SDE school technology survey found that a small percentage of classrooms have dedicated Internet access and an equally small percentage of teachers are trained in using and supervising this instructional tool. Only 30 percent of schools have computers which meet current industry standards.

Dropout prevention continues to be a focus of educators along with a new emphasis on providing early intervention for students who are considered at risk of failure. Programs proposed range from a voluntary school choice program for four-year-olds and providing more assistance for infants and children with developmental disabilities to statewide alternative education programs and services for adjudicated youth.

Unfunded mandates cannot be ignored as schools are now required to provide additional testing, tutoring and monitoring in first, second and third grade; they are also required to provide additional testing of students who need to prove reading ability

before getting a driver's license. In addition, the higher accreditation standards resulting from 1990's reform law call for the provision of elementary and middle-level counselors and librarians to serve all students.

The services and accountability area covers standardizing the minimum salary schedule (requires at least \$21 million annually), requests funds to increase support personnel salaries (now averaging \$10,388 annually) by about five percent at the option of the local school board, and provides for increasing state student testing costs and federal matching funds.



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1998

The Future

Oklahoma's investment in its children, 26.6 percent of the state's population, is much bigger than just its investment in schools. While public schools can provide a good foundation for success in life, the factors that affect children at home tend to be the biggest predictors of success in school. The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA) has been monitoring the status of children for a number of years. From its most recent report:

- the rate of confirmed child abuse cases grew 57.9 percent from 1984-85 to 1995-96;
- the percent of children in poverty increased by 50.9 percent from 1980 to 1993; and
- the rate of juvenile arrests grew by 98 percent from 1990 to 1996.

This report also reveals that an Oklahoma child is a victim of abuse or neglect every 45 minutes; that 13 more Oklahoma children have joined the poverty rolls every day since 1980; and nearly 1,300 children between the ages of 10 and 17 were arrested for violent crimes in 1996.

The OICA uses the above and a number of other benchmarks, as do the State Department of Education and others, to monitor Oklahoma's progress.

"Progress is not just improving statistics," the *1998 Kids Count Factbook* notes. "Progress is using all of this information — and more — to make good decisions about state and community

budgets and programs that affect children and youth. Effective programs and policies work together with strong communities and families to improve the benchmarks. It's not just about numbers; each number has a face, a family, and a future."

Much progress has been made by educators, but much more needs to be done. "Three things must occur," State Superintendent Sandy Garrett says, "before we can be assured we have done all we can:

- Investment in our schools must remain the budget priority;
- greater efforts must be made to involve families in schools, and
- we must continue to strengthen our academic standards for students and our expectations of schools."

These are the areas the State Superintendent, Board of Education and Department staff pursue every day. While this report seeks to provide an accounting of the investment and the returns in Oklahoma schools, this investment is not measured simply in dollars nor are the benefits reaped simply in test scores.

*"Not everything
that counts can be counted,
and not everything
that can be counted counts."*

Albert Einstein

Appendix

Some historical notes:

- At the Territorial Legislature's first meeting in August 1890, legislators modified and adopted the school laws of Kansas as the laws for Oklahoma Territory. After ratification of the constitution on September 17, 1907, E. D. Cameron was elected Oklahoma's first state superintendent. The State Board of Education at the time oversaw all schools including colleges.

- The first biennial report of the state superintendent noted that in the 1906-07 school year there were approximately 167,803 pupils enrolled in public schools in "old Oklahoma" and about 32,431 pupils enrolled in public schools in that part of Oklahoma then known as Indian Territory.

- In 1914, Oklahoma had 5,880 school districts which is the largest number in any year since statehood. Schools were first established to be within walking distance of every child. Schools first provided were nine square miles in area. Between 1947 and 1965, almost 3,300 schools were annexed or consolidated.

- In 1919, the state Legislature made its first appropriation of \$100,000 "to help pay current expenses of financially weak schools"; this became an annual appropriation which by 1925 had reached \$500,000 per year. The State Equalization Fund was enacted in 1927, earmarking one-fourth of the revenue from gross production tax. In 1935, the Legislature passed the first state aid law, providing \$8,200,000 for each year of the biennium to allow schools to be in session a minimum term of 8 1/2 months. Prior to this, schools were in session from 3 to 8 months.

- In 1919, the Legislature legalized motorized vehicles for transportation of pupils which previously had been provided by horse-drawn vehicles. Local schools provided all transportation until the general equalization aid law of 1935, after which transportation became a part of the annual program of schools.

- In 1920, Congress enacted a measure "for the promotion of the vocational rehabilitation of persons disabled in industry or otherwise and their

return to civil employment." House Bill 151, passed by the 1945 session of the Oklahoma Legislature, was the first special education law in the state.

- The Indian Education Division of the State Department of Education was created under the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1936 as a cooperative effort of the Department, the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U. S. Department of the Interior.

- An Act of Congress, effective June 4, 1946, provided for a school lunch program on a permanent basis. As a civilian component of the national defense, the Civil Defense Adult Education program was created in 1964.

- The Oklahoma School Code was enacted in 1947 to repeal obsolete and contradictory laws not meeting the needs of modern schools, group all statutes bearing on a particular subject, and provide new laws needed to improve administration of schools. The Code (Title 70) has been added to, deleted from and expanded upon but is the basis of school law in Oklahoma today.

- Continuing education for locally elected school board members was mandated in the 1963 legislative session. Workshops have been provided by the Department and Oklahoma State School Boards Association and others since then. In 1990, additional education requirements were mandated for board members.

- The Department has been active in the development of distance learning in its various forms throughout the state, helping develop the state's first fiber-optic network for Panhandle schools in the late 1980s.

- The Education Reform Act of 1990 was signed into law in April of that year by Governor Henry Bellmon in ceremonies at a Tulsa school with Senate President Pro Tempore Robert V. Cullison, Speaker of the House Steve Lewis, then Secretary of Education Sandy Garrett and Chairman of Task Force 2000 George Singer. In November 1991, voters cast their ballots two-to-one against a state question to repeal the new law.

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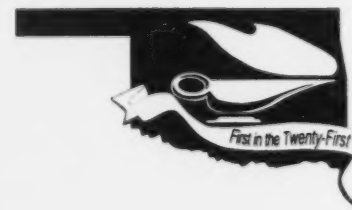
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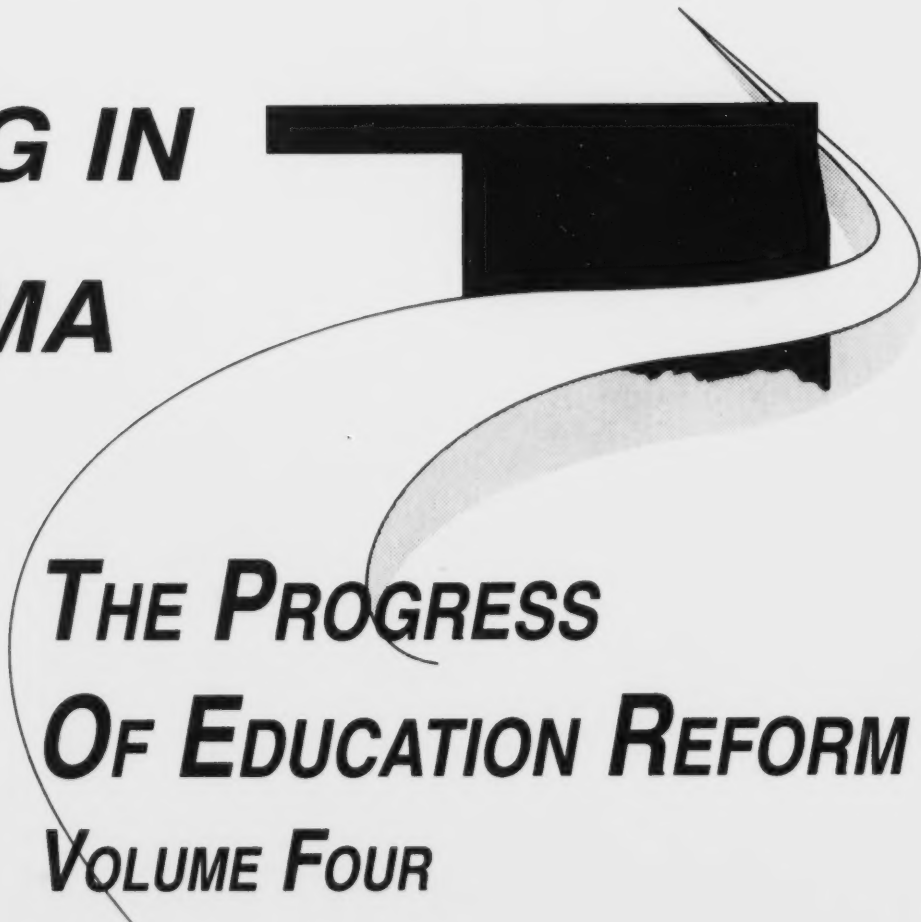
INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA

THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME FOUR

SANDY GARRETT
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JANUARY 1999



INVESTING IN OKLAHOMA



THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION REFORM VOLUME FOUR

REPRINT

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State Superintendent Sandy Garrett
Oklahoma State Department of Education
 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4599
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Investing In Oklahoma, Volume Four





January 21, 1999

Citizens of Oklahoma
Governor Frank Keating
Senate President Pro Tempore Stratton Taylor
Speaker of the House Loyd Benson
Members of the 47th Legislature

With your help, the state of education in Oklahoma continues to be focused on continuing reform through higher standards, student-centered policies, strong assessments, targeted and significant investment, and greater accountability. While state appropriations have been substantial, Oklahoma's national ranking in per-pupil spending actually went from 47th in 1996 to 48th in 1997. The lower per-pupil expenditure comes from an increase of more than 45,000 students in the '90s, new statutory mandates, greater fiscal control and more, funding appropriated outside the state aid formula for schools. With this in mind, the large return Oklahoma is seeing on its investment in students is all the more impressive. We can be proud to say lower class sizes, stronger accreditation standards, higher academic standards, improved student performance, and increasing numbers of better prepared teachers are reality in 1999.

On an average school day in Oklahoma some 627,553 students go to public schools; 46 percent are poor enough to qualify for free and reduced-price meals. Many of them are gifted; some are abused; many excel in sports; some come to school hungry; many make A's and B's, some C's and D's, and some of them fail. These are the boys and girls and young adults in whom Oklahoma invests and this is the background upon which any benchmarks of state progress must be evaluated. The following is a brief report on common education's progress on the road of reform which I was honored to help build with such former public servants as Governor Henry Bellmon, Senate President Pro Tempore Robert V. Cullison, Speaker of the House Steve Lewis, and the members of 42nd state Legislature in 1990.

- While nearly 70 percent of Oklahoma's graduating high school seniors in 1998 took the ACT, only 37 percent did nationally. This difference is considered significant enough to account for Oklahoma being .5 away from the national average score of 21. Also the 1998

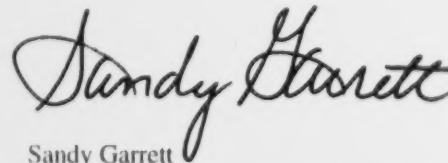
participation rate of 69.0 is good improvement from the 56.8 percent who took the test in 1989. Not only does this indicate more students are considering postsecondary education, it makes Oklahoma's progress from 19.9 to 20.5 even more impressive.

- The State Board of Education has begun public hearings on increasing graduating standards to the level of the ACT-recommended core courses or more. Now that the state's core curriculum has been in place several years and the early grades are showing progress, we must focus on quality of secondary level classes. Still, according to the State Regents of Higher Education, the number of Oklahoma freshmen entering college needing remediation continues to decline. It's a fact: Significantly more high school graduates are better prepared for college today than in 1990.

- Oklahoma is rapidly developing a system of alternative education like none other in the country and this effort must continue to be supported. Of the nearly 13,336 students served, an average of 12.5 percent were considered recovered dropouts and 17 percent were self-reported juvenile offenders. In 1998, 1,640 students graduated from high school who might otherwise have not. The projected, positive economic impact (income and other taxes graduates will pay in their lives, and unemployment compensation, welfare and other government services not needed) is an estimated \$132,840,000 according to the Oklahoma Technical Assistance Center in Cushing.

With one in four Oklahoma children living in poverty, and near-the-top national divorce and incarceration rates, the path before us remains working harder and smarter to meet the state's educational needs. As such, the state of education is that of a work in progress — steady, but not radical change — built on a myriad of new opportunities and bound by the commitment of accountability. It is progress of which I am proud to be a part and in which I have appreciated your efforts and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandy Garrett". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first and last names clearly legible.

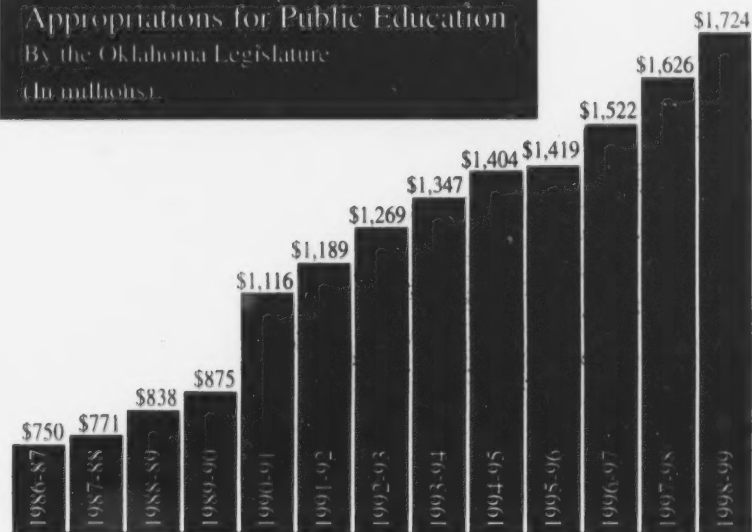
Sandy Garrett

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Introduction

The major restructuring of the State Department of Education (SDE) in 1991 resulted in a more efficient approach to meeting the needs of children and implementing reforms, with a bonus of more than \$32.5 million in cumulative savings. The 1999 fiscal year budget for the state education agency was 12.1 percent less than that of 1991 — an 8.1 percent reduction in personnel services and 24.9 percent in operations. At the same time, public school funding has increased to a record \$1.7 billion for Fiscal Year 1999. However, because of inflation and other states making greater financial investments in schools, rank in per-pupil funding has remained in the bottom five nationally.

Appropriations for Public Education By the Oklahoma Legislature (in millions)



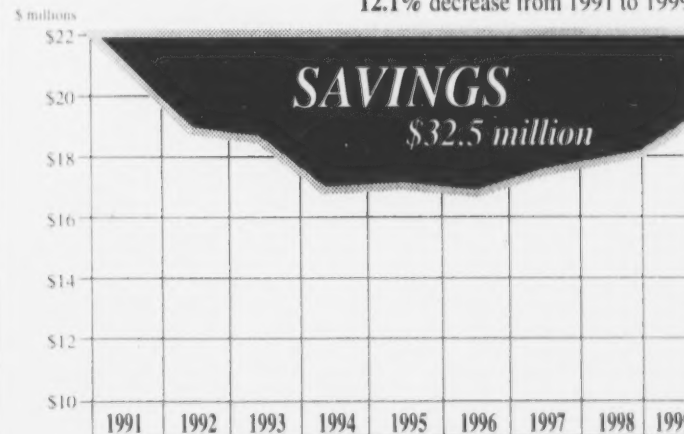
Source: Fiscal Services, State Department of Education, January 1999

Investing In Oklahoma, Volume Four

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State Department of Education Budget

12.1% decrease from 1991 to 1999



Source: Fiscal Services, Oklahoma State Department of Education

Through attention to results, use of technology for business efficiency and a new commitment to customer service, the SDE has helped educators implement reform mandates and build upon opportunities.

"Still, it is the return we are seeing on the investment in students which is having the greatest impact on the state," Superintendent Garrett says. The report that follows focuses on the progress of education reform and the status of the state's investment.

Introduction

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Benchmarks

On an average fall day in Oklahoma:

- 627,353 children attend Oklahoma's public schools;
- about 71,000 of them are served in special education classes.
- nearly 32,000 are identified locally as speaking a language other than English;
- more than 13,300 are being served in alternative education programs;
- one in four Oklahoma children live in poverty; and
- 46 percent qualify for free and reduced-price meals.

These are the young people in whom Oklahoma invests and these facts provide background upon which any benchmarks of state progress must be evaluated. A number of "report cards" were developed in the 1990s. Among these are Student Testing Report Cards on each district issued by the SDE and published in most newspapers.

Parents, students and educators annually receive the results of standardized tests taken each spring at the various grade levels — some mandated in state law since 1986 and others required locally. While these are the best benchmarks (in terms of history of data,

accuracy and objectivity) available to policymakers and citizens, comparing schools within states or comparing state education systems are not what these tests were designed to do. They were designed to help teachers and parents better serve individual students.

Probably the most widely known national test is the American College Test (ACT), the college-entrance exam required for admission to state universities. It was taken by about 70 percent of Oklahoma's class of 1998, as compared to 37 percent nationally. As a benchmark, the ACT is considered one of the best measures of the cumulative results of K-12 schooling in Oklahoma. The Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) is taken by about 8 percent of students, most planning to go to out-of-state colleges and universities.

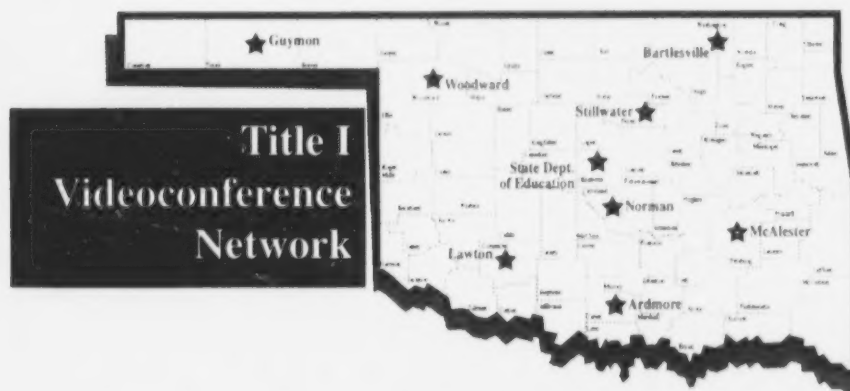
A national achievement test selected through competitive bids every five years, (currently the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, ITBS) is given annually to 3rd and 7th grade students. By law, the results of these norm-referenced tests are used to determine low-performing and high-challenge elementary and middle schools. The Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests, criterion-referenced tests designed to measure the state's mandated curriculum, are required by state law to be taken in Grades 5, 8 and 11.

All of these tests are scored differently, by different testing companies and on different scales. This complicates matters of analysis but provides a multilevel set of benchmarks to assist in evaluating Oklahoma's progress.

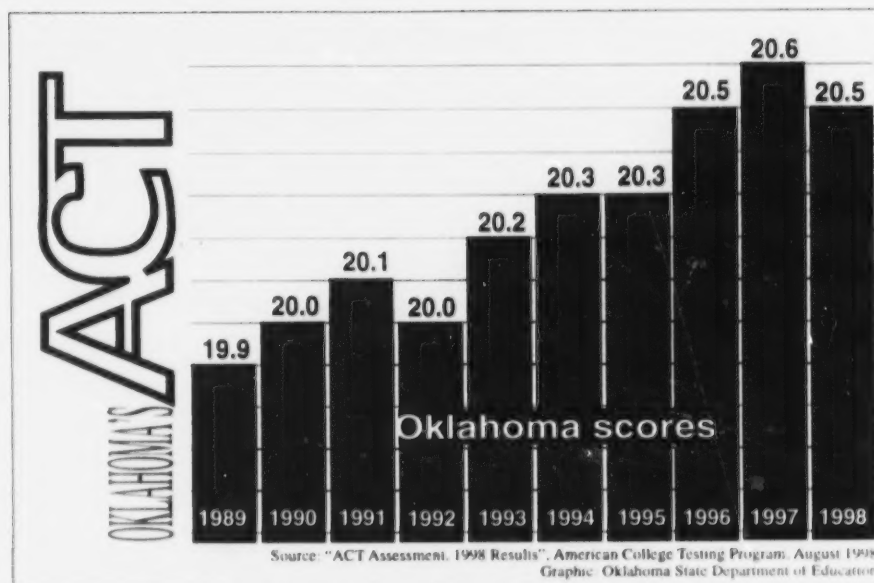
RESULTS:

Since the first results of the state core curriculum tests in 1995, the data has been used by the SDE to design continuing education programs for teachers. Though no state funding is provided to the SDE for this purpose, curriculum specialists at the SDE use aggregate test data to develop and present statewide training sessions addressing weak academic areas. Innovative workshops are presented to thousands of teachers each year, frequently integrating subject areas and focusing on hands-on instruction, often addressing problem areas specific to a particular school site or district.

To reach even more teachers, Oklahoma's new Title I Videoconferencing Network connects the SDE in Oklahoma City to eight field sites statewide, as well as to resources across the state, nation and world. In addition, training provided as part of



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, December 1999

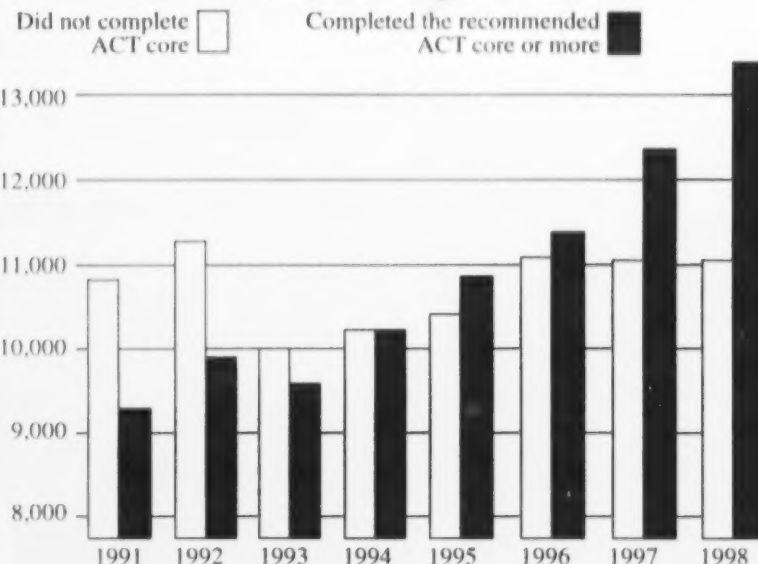


the Advanced Placement Incentives Program has been funded for 2,785 teachers in just three years.

Even though Oklahoma has twice the percentage of graduating seniors being tested than the national average, the state average composite ACT score is 0.6 higher than it was in 1989 and is near the national average of 21.0.

Remediation needs of college students are determined by subject area scores on the ACT in English, reading, mathematics and science. The percent of Oklahoma students identified as needing remedial courses was 34 percent in 1996 — down from 42 percent two years before and 38 percent in fall 1995, according to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Of those

Oklahoma Students Taking ACT Core



American College Testing (ACT) program suggested core curriculum:

4 years English

3 years Mathematics (1 year Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and 1/2 year Trigonometry, Calculus, Computer Mathematics/Computer Science and/or other courses beyond Algebra II)

3 years Social Studies (1 year American History, World History, American Government, 1/2 year Economics, Geography, Psychology, and/or other History)

3 years Science (1 year General/Physical/Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry and/or Physics)

Source: "ACT Assessment 1998 Results," ACT, August 1998
Graphic: Oklahoma State Department of Education, October 1998

who scored below the Regents' benchmark, 33.1 percent did so because they were weak in mathematics.

The increasing percentage of graduating high school seniors taking the ACT college entrance exam (from 56.8 percent in 1989 to nearly 70 percent in 1998) indicates that more students are considering postsecondary education, and it makes Oklahoma's increase in its composite score even more impressive.

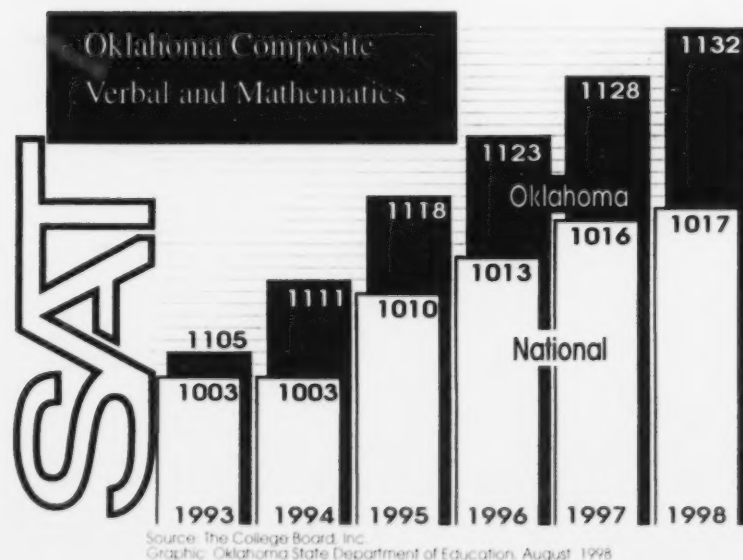
The most important trend apparent in the data is in the increasing number of test-takers who complete the ACT-recommended core courses. Academic advisement toward rigorous core courses in high school is key to student preparation for success in adult life. Progress has been made toward this goal. Since 1992, the percent of school sites served by counselors has risen from 68 to 86 percent in 1998.

Still, more must be done to educate students and parents on the skills required in the twenty-first century. In 1996, the State Board of Education raised the number of units in mathematics required for graduation. This standard takes effect next year. The Board is beginning public hearings to again raise standards to meet or exceed the ACT-recommended core curriculum of at least 4 units

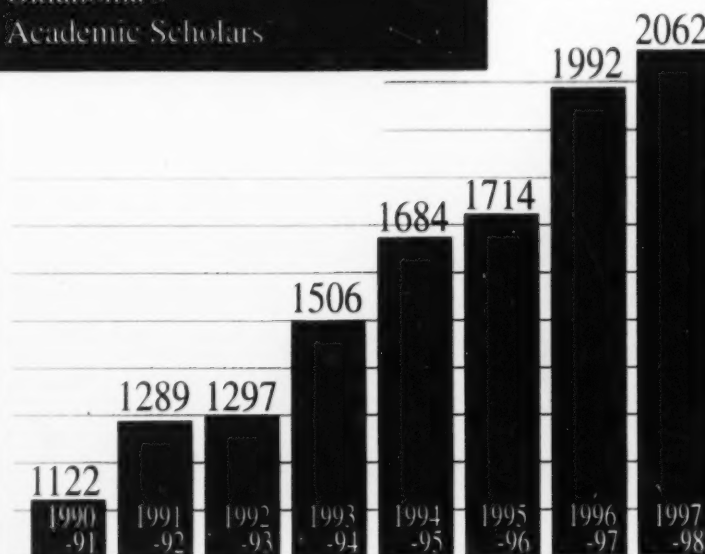
of English, 3 units of mathematics, 3 units of science and 3 units of social studies from among specified courses.

Superintendent Garrett and the State Board of Education have proposed an Incentives for Academic Success program to financially reward schools which go beyond the call in helping students prepare for work and/or college by taking additional, rigorous core courses.

Even in the absence of such an incentive, the state's students continue a trend of taking tougher courses. The Oklahoma Academic Scholars program recognizes outstanding achievement of graduating seniors. To receive the distinction on their diploma and transcript, by law students must have a 3.7 grade point average



Oklahoma's Academic Scholars



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, April 1998

in Grades 9-12, complete 22 units of course work, including four units of English, three units each of mathematics, science and social studies (or two units of social studies and two of the same foreign language), and achieve a 27 composite score on the ACT. Teachers and counselors continue setting high expectations for students, and as a result 2,062 students were recognized as Oklahoma Academic Scholars in 1998.

The state's average SAT composite score is 1132, up from last year and well above the national average of 1017. Oklahoma's average SAT score has increased 30 points since 1992; because of the change in the SAT norm, no comparison can be made prior to 1992.

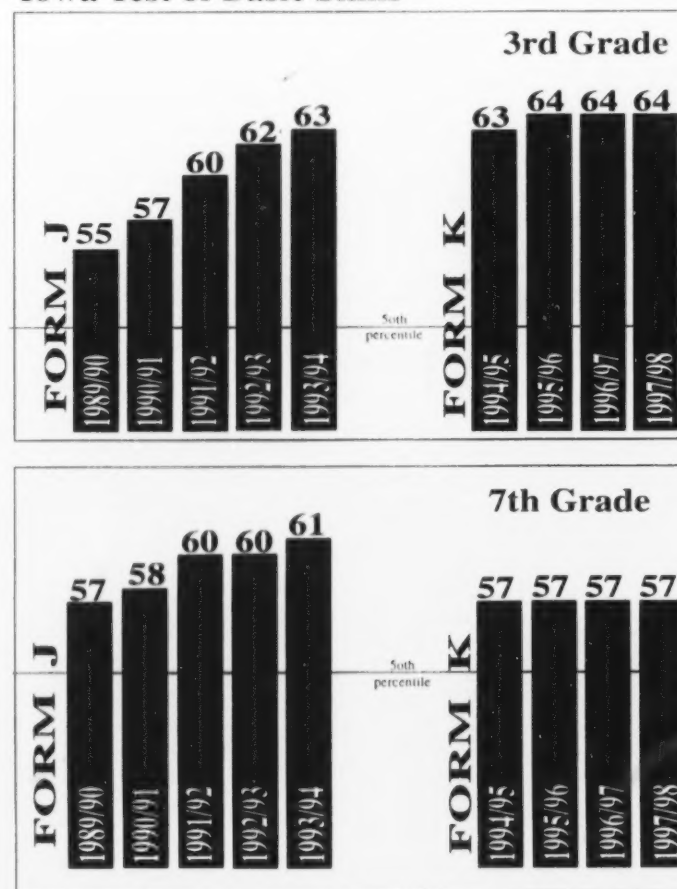
An ITBS achievement test score is expressed in terms of the National Percentile Rank (NPR). Students are compared to a national sampling of student test results at the time the test is written, which is within five years of the test being given. The 50th percentile is considered to be the national average. Contrary to a widely circulated myth, all states DO NOT score above the national average on this type of test. For example, in 1996, New Mexico had a third grade average score on the ITBS at the 47th percentile; Mississippi's fourth grade average was at the 45th percentile; and Arizona's fourth graders were at the 49th percentile.

Oklahoma third graders, showing the most impact from the early grade focus of 1990's reform legislation, scored at the 64th percentile for the third year. Seventh graders scored at the 57th percentile for the fourth year.

In Grades 5, 8 and 11, the Core Curriculum Test results are reported in terms of the percent of students scoring in the satisfactory range (see table, page 11). The satisfactory level or benchmark is determined by the State Board of Education as outlined in law.

Students scoring unsatisfactorily must be offered remediation and take the test again to monitor progress and guide educators. The test given at Grade 11 is based by law on the knowledge expected of students by the end of the 12th grade. This allows some time for remediation prior to graduation. In addition, detailed skills data from these tests are used by the State Department of Education to develop continuing education workshops for teachers.

Oklahoma's Total Composite National Percentile Rank Iowa Test of Basic Skills



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education; August 1998

REFORM

The ACT and other assessments point to mathematics as a particularly weak area for Oklahoma students. As such, more math, as well as science and reading workshops and conferences for teachers are being provided by the SDE, other agencies, colleges and universities, and private associations.

Superintendent Garrett continues to urge the teacher colleges to seek out education majors for all of the shortage areas but particularly mathematics and science, and to provide a solid background in a comprehensive approach to reading instruction including phonics.

In July 1997, Superintendent Garrett issued an alert for all schools to focus on reading in all classes at all grade levels. "As parents, policymakers and citizens," Garrett said, "we must make certain all students at all grade levels in every school can read."

Grade	Subject	1995 Percent tested Satisfactory	1996 Percent tested Satisfactory	1997 Percent tested Satisfactory	1998 Percent tested Satisfactory	1999 Percent tested Satisfactory
5 8 11*	Science	79% 75% 70%	78% 78% 71%	81% 77% 72%	85% 78% 75%	
5 8 11*	Mathematics	79% 70% 56%	77% 74% 59%	80% 72% 58%	82% 71% 61%	
5 8 11*	Reading	— 70% —	76% 70% 73%	77% 72% 75%	76% 75% 72%	
5 8 11*	Writing	— 88% —	95% 94% 87%	95% 89% 94%	91% 91% 94%	
5 8 11*	History/ Government	— — —	— — —	71% 58% 74%	73% 59% 73%	
5 8 11*	Geography	— — —	— — —	— — —	57% 46% 43%	
11*	Okla. History	—	—	—	49%	
5 8 11*	Visual Arts & General Music	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —	Starts Spring 1999

*12th grade test given in 11th grade

Source: State Department of Education, August 1998

Oklahoma
Core Curriculum
Test Results

The state core curriculum, as mandated in law, has been in place for seven years and is currently undergoing its third review and update. Mathematics, science, and social studies standards will be the focus of the current review and teachers throughout the state have been asked to submit their recommendations for improvement of the core curriculum. Also in 1999, the State Board will likely move to again increase high school graduation requirements.

More and more school leaders are taking steps to build new or better Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings for their students. Since 1996 began, when the Advanced Placement Incentives Program, the number of high schools offering AP courses has more than doubled. This program paves the way to a successful college career by offering students the opportunity to take advanced classes and examinations which can yield college credit while in high school.

Advanced Placement Classes In Oklahoma Public Schools in 1998

823 new classes added last year.

Examination fees	
paid for students in need	1,335
Registration fees	
paid for AP teacher training	2,874
Amount paid to local districts	
for outstanding student scores	\$516,500
(From the incentive portion of the allocated monies)	

Plus 428 upgraded or expanded classes

[State Department of Education, School Improvement, Jan. 1999]

While it may not be a "reform" per se, a statewide school safety hotline is helping Oklahoma's schools to keep their campuses drug- and violence-free. A nationally unique state school safety program,

1-877-SAFE-CALL, ext. OK1

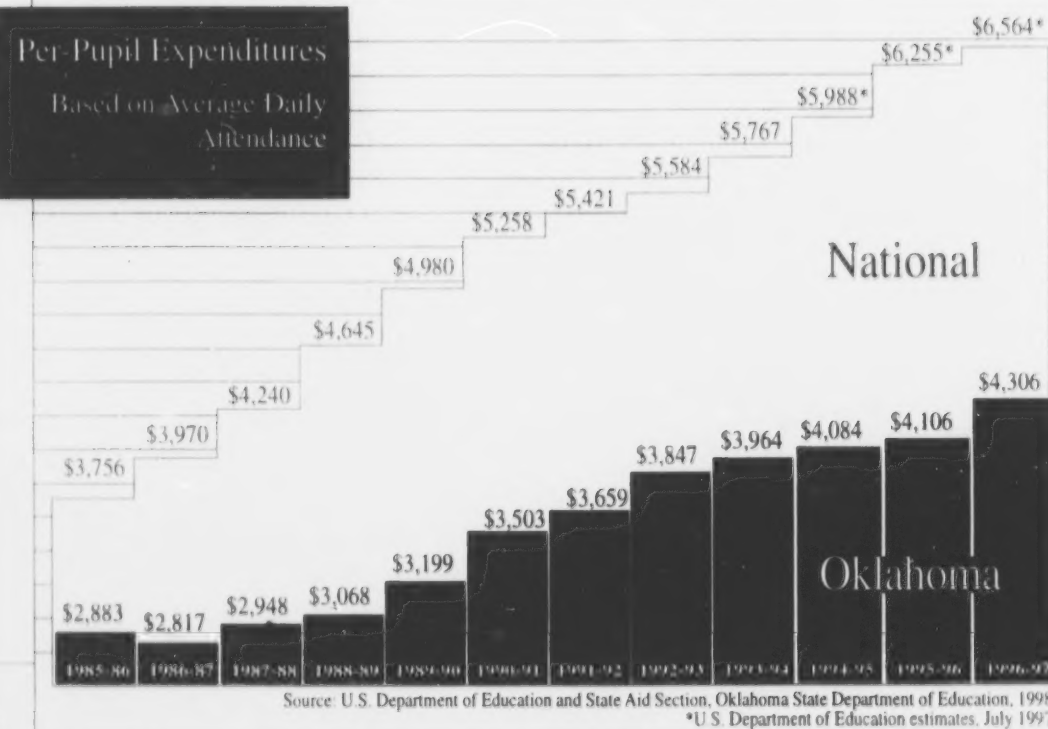
SAFE-CALL, was initiated in the summer of 1998 to provide an anonymous avenue for students, parents, teachers or school patrons to notify local officials of violent, illegal or unsafe situations on campus. The hotline (1-877-SAFE-CALL extension OK1) became operational statewide Sept. 1, 1998, and more than 400 calls have been received since, with the larger percentages being calls regarding violence (includes weapons, threats, harassment, fights and vandalism) and drugs (including cigarettes).

School administrators are receiving useful information they might not have otherwise, and are responding to callers as to how they are addressing the problems. SAFE-CALL was funded for Fiscal Year 1999 with Federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools state administrative funds, most of which will not be available in FY 2000. Sources of funding to continue the program are being sought.

Four years ago the state superintendent termed character education the "missing link" to Oklahoma's education reform plans. Since that time, many schools have embraced the concept and worked with their communities to implement a focus on the generally accepted elements of good character (e.g., caring, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness).

Progress on the various test-score indicators continues despite Oklahoma's near-the-bottom ranking in funding per student and teacher salaries, and near-the-top rankings in divorce, incarceration and teen pregnancy. Complicating matters in the classroom, the Office of Accountability reported one juvenile offender for every 49.5 students in the 1996-97 school year. Considering that nearly one quarter of Oklahoma children live in poverty and a similar percentage of adults have not completed high school, Oklahoma's investment in public schools is more important than ever.

State appropriations to common education in the '90s have provided much-needed funds to support public schools and



Percentage Change in Inflation-Adjusted Per-Pupil Expenditures (1996 dollars) with National Ranking for Regional States

State	Change in amount 1995-1996	Rank	Change in amount 1985-1996	Rank
National Average	0.3%		21.7%	
New Mexico	17.9%	1	49.9%	3
Kansas	1.3%	23	17.9%	33
Texas	0.5%	30	19.8%	31
Arkansas	0.3%	31	-2.7%	46
Missouri	-1.9%	43	14.7%	35
Oklahoma	-4.0%	49	-3.0%	47

SOURCE: "Report Card on American Education 1996," by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), October 1997, Table 5, pg. 15

their students. However, since many states have invested more, Oklahoma fell to 48th in 1997 in terms of financial support of schools per student. When inflation is taken into account, per pupil spending was 3 percent lower in 1996 than 1985. Nonetheless, school board members, administrators, educators and patrons have been able to accomplish many of the reforms — lower class sizes, stronger accreditation standards, higher expectations and academic standards for students, and increasing numbers of better educated teachers.

Rapid enrollment growth statewide has strained state resources. No matter how one counts students — October 1 snapshot of fall enrollment, average daily attendance or average daily membership — the public school population in Oklahoma has grown significantly. Compared to the benchmark year of 1989-90, there were 49,896 students more in fall enrollment on October 1, 1998.

The ethnic composition of the school population also has changed over the years. Oklahoma has the largest American Indian population of any state. According to the 1990 Census, 13 percent of the nation's total Native American population resides in Oklahoma, from 39 recognized tribes.

On October 1, 1998, Oklahoma's public schools enrolled 100,733 American Indian students (up from 96,425 in 1997); 8,558 Asian/Pacific Islander students (up from 8,349 a year ago); 67,115 Black students (up from 65,888); 30,794 Hispanic students (up from 28,365); and 421,276 White/Non-Hispanic and other students (down from 424,654 a year ago).

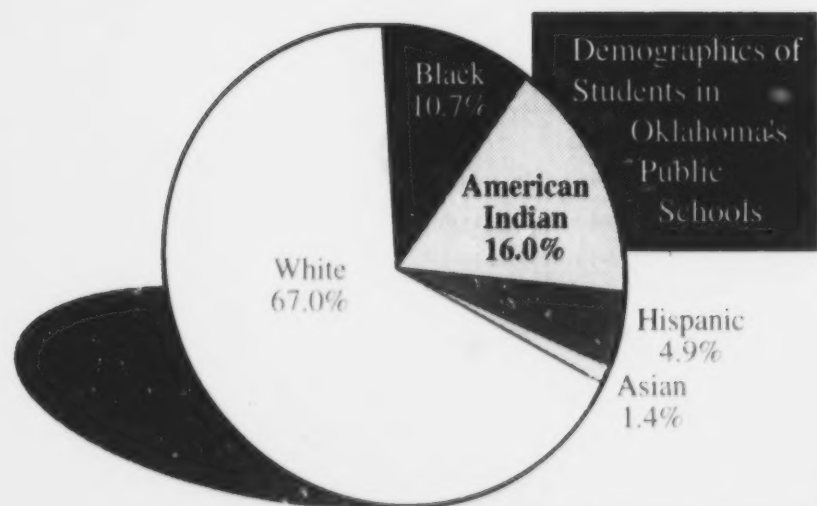
Many students who are Asian, Hispanic or American Indian, live in homes where a language other than English is spoken. Often, these students either speak no English or are considered Limited English Proficient (LEP). Services, particularly federally funded teacher training programs, are provided to assist schools in teaching LEP students to be fluent in speaking and reading English.

The school funding formula has been calculated since 1980 based on weighted student counts, which include grade level weights, student category weights for special education, gifted, bilingual and economically disadvantaged, and factors for school



Source: SDE Accreditation, January 1999

Oklahoma State Department of Education



Source: State Department of Education, January 1999

district teacher index (based on college degrees and years of experience) and small school/isolation weights.

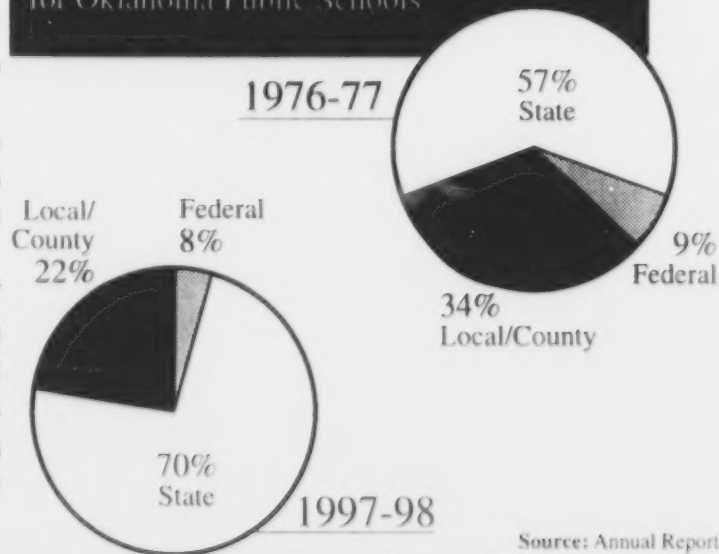
The average annual increase over the last five years has been 13,366 "weighted students." From 1989-1990 through 1997-1998, revenues to Oklahoma public schools have increased only \$602 in weighted average daily membership per pupil.

House Bill 2055, passed in 1996, brought about a new calculation of the state aid formula for funding schools. When the midyear allocation notices were mailed to schools in December 1998, State Superintendent Garrett said, "This is the second disbursement of funds to meet the needs of growing school districts during the year it occurs, rather than through a 'midterm supplement' appropriated by the Legislature the following school year."

The number of school districts continues to decline. In 1914, Oklahoma had 5,880 school districts — the largest number since statehood when schools were located within walking distance of every child. Between 1947 and 1965, almost 3,300 schools were annexed or consolidated. Incentives provided in 1990 fostered renewed interest in consolidation, reducing the number of school districts in January 1998 to 547, as it is today.

In order to comply with the class-size mandates of 1990, schools have hired additional teachers in large numbers and have passed bond issues to provide more classrooms. Class size has been one of the most costly reform mandates, yet it is regarded by

Funding Sources for Oklahoma Public Schools



Source: Annual Report, State Department of Education, January 1999

**Comparison of
Raw Average Daily Membership (ADM),
Weighted Average Daily Membership and Per Capita
(or per pupil) Revenues for Public Schools**

Year	Raw ADM	Weighted ADM	Per Pupil Rev./ Weighted ADM
1989-90	573,323.37	755,985.21	\$2,283
1995-96	612,093.68	889,804.98	\$2,710
1996-97	615,607.45	898,637.42	\$2,809
1997-98	618,239.76	908,034.87	\$2,885
1998-99*	627,553.79	921,089.15	not available

*First nine weeks

Source: State Department of Education, January 1999

teachers and policy makers in the state and nation as one of the most valuable.

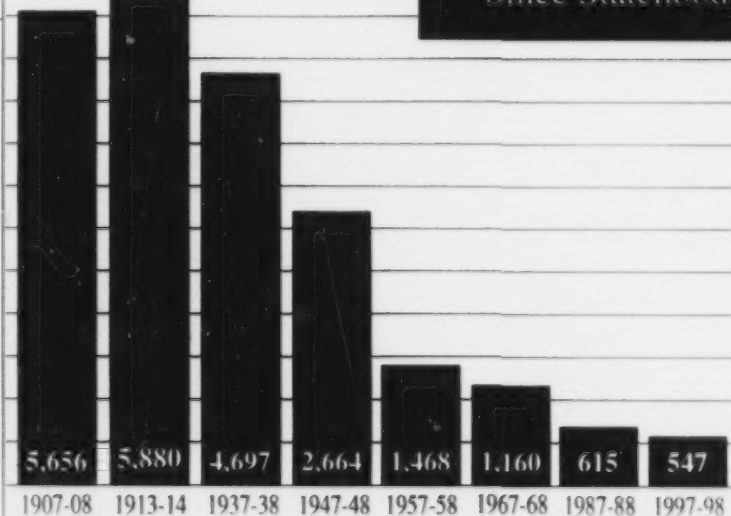
In 1998 the "Quality Counts" report published by *Education Week* ranked Oklahoma's State Board of Education standards number one in Quality of Teaching Standards giving Oklahoma the only A, specifically an A-, in the category. The report continued this rating for 1999. This supports the National Education Goals Panel's rating Oklahoma as one of the top states in the nation in terms of percent of teachers certified in their content area.

Oklahoma is fortunate to have an 18-year history of providing a residency committee program for its beginning educators. Since 1982, more than 29,000 first-year teachers have participated in the Residency Program, receiving significant guidance and assistance from a mentor teacher, administrator, and higher education

representative. This committee has the responsibility of a performance-based assessment and ultimately recommends certification or noncertification.

In addition, professional development (or continuing education) of teachers and administrators has been a priority for many years. Oklahoma legislators' commitment can be seen in the increase in funds allocated to schools for professional development activities: the Fiscal Year 1989 allocation was \$1.88 per student in average daily attendance (ADA); by comparison, the 1999 allocation was \$9.12.

**Number of
School Districts
Since Statehood**

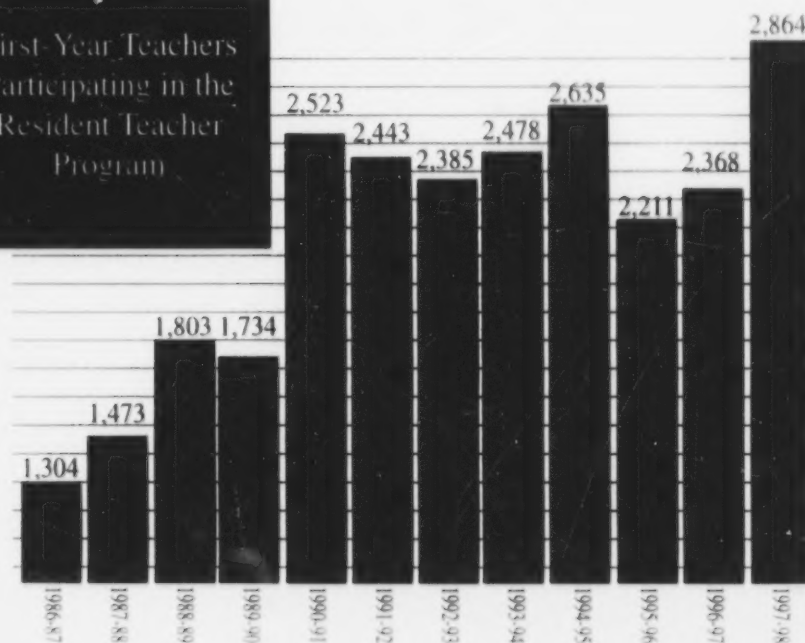


Source: "A History Outline: Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1900 to 1965, and Annual Reports since then; Graphic, March 1998

PROGRESS:

The Legislature continues to build on the reforms of 1990. A good example is extension of the minimum teacher salary schedule from 15 to 25 years to include career teachers. While local school boards continue to provide as much compensation to teachers as they can, raising the minimum and providing funding to extend that minimum helps Oklahoma recruit quality teachers.

First-Year Teachers
Participating in the
Resident Teacher
Program



Source: Resident Teacher Program,
Oklahoma State Department of Education, January 1999

University Status Report, 1997-98

Top Ten Universities participating in the Resident Teacher Program by rank order of Oklahoma graduates employed in Oklahoma schools:

1) Northeastern State University	621
2) University of Central Oklahoma	569
3) Oklahoma State University	342
5) East Central University	198
4) University of Oklahoma	165
6) Southwestern Oklahoma State University	145
7) Southeastern Oklahoma State University	126
8) Oral Roberts University	109
9) Cameron University	108
10) Langston University	84

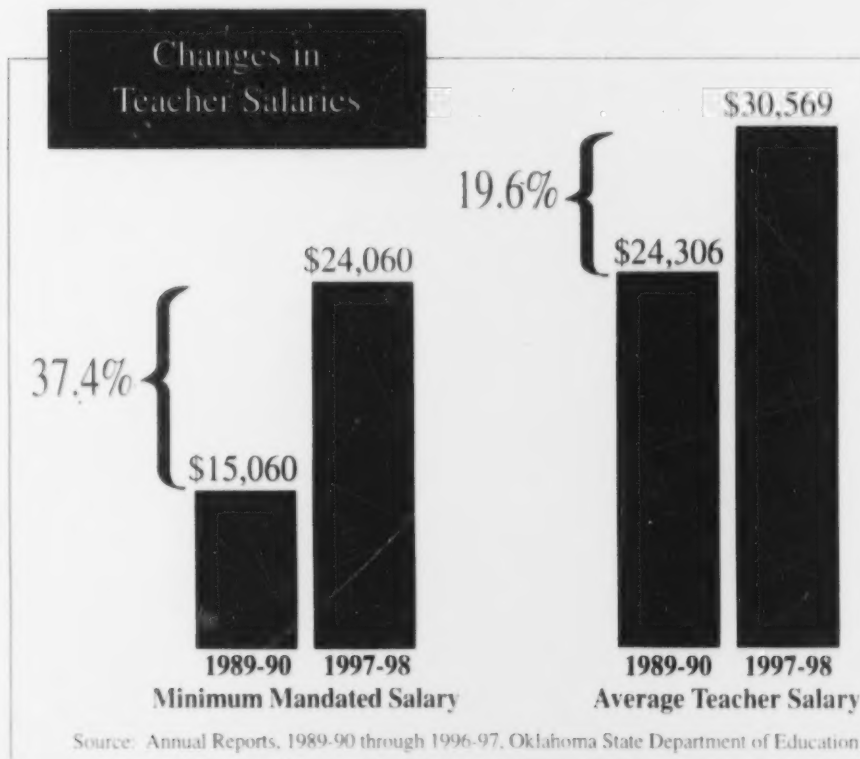
Source: Resident Teacher Program,
Oklahoma State Department of Education, January 1999

The focus in the '90s continues to be — and must be — on improving the average teacher salary in order to retain our most experienced and educated teachers. Surrounding states are bold and innovative and seem to have more money to offer when luring Oklahoma teachers away. For example, Fort Worth (Texas) Independent Schools offered \$2,000 signing bonuses to teachers who signed contracts with them by June 1998.

The Alternative Placement Program is popular with applicants and school administrators. The number of Oklahomans alternatively certified as teachers grows each year. More than 1,900 degreed professionals with practical experience in their career fields

are certified, and 911 are employed in schools today. One such teacher was even among the 12 finalists for Oklahoma Teacher of the Year in 1997.

This program, referred to as alternative certification, complements the federally funded Troops to Teachers Program, which assists recently active members of the U.S. armed forces and former civilian employees of the departments of Defense and Energy to begin careers in public schools. The Troops to Teachers program has an emphasis on serving Title I schools (those with



Quality of Teaching Standards

Top 10 States Score

1. North Carolina	93
2. Connecticut	93
3. South Carolina	92
4. Oklahoma	92
5. Kentucky	89
6. Louisiana	86
7. Michigan	86
8. California	85
9. Massachusetts	85
10. New York	85

Source: *Education Week*, "Quality Counts" report, January 1999

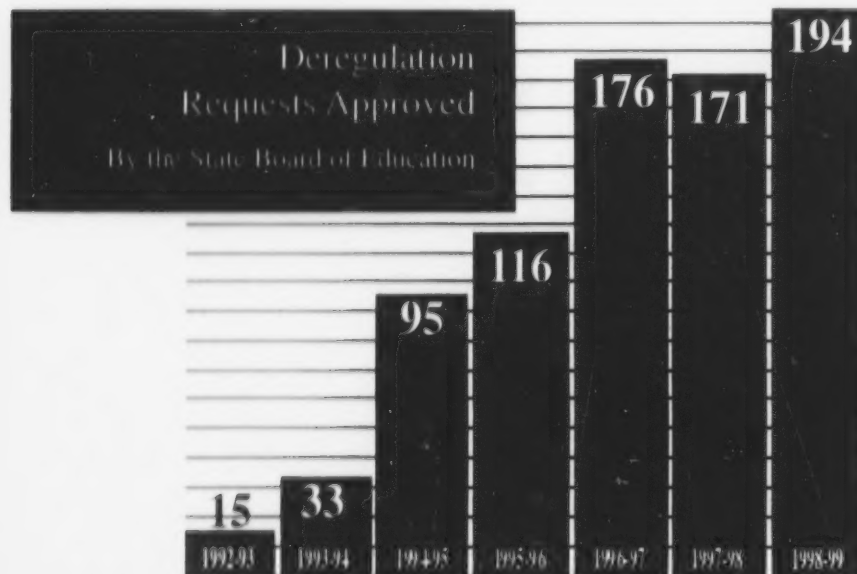
high levels of students in poverty). The Department of Defense provided nearly \$1 million to public schools to offset a portion of the participants' base salaries over a five-year period.

A multitude of public and corporate supporters have reached out to help make Oklahoma's State Teacher of the Year celebration an event worthy of the honor. According to the Council of Chief State School Officers, Oklahoma is now the top state in the nation in terms of what it offers its Ambassador of Teaching. Teacher of the Year sponsors, led by the State Fair of Oklahoma, provided more than \$7,000 in cash awards, the use of a new car, cellular

phone and many other prizes in 1997 and 1998. Oklahoma's Teacher of the Year Lynn Peacher is the second winner to be named among the final four nationally in the last ten years.

INNOVATION:

Some districts have found innovative ways to increase student achievement through deregulation of state rules. Local control is clearly supported by the State Superintendent and the State Board of Education, which have approved more than 600 deregulation requests. The Board has significantly streamlined its rules in light



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, March 1998

of the information gained in allowing schools to be free from certain state regulations and even some state laws (via statutory waivers).

Through the use of Title I federal funds, eight videoconference sites were designed, built and, in February 1998, became operational, as previously mentioned. This has brought more technical assistance and professional development workshops more efficiently to teachers around the state in the Title I areas of reading and math. Trained teachers work in schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty. Nearly all Oklahoma school districts are served by Title I.

The U. S. Department of Education reports that Oklahoma is the first state in the nation to have such a network for Title I.

"We thought it would be a better use of funds to build this infrastructure to provide training to teachers nearer to their districts than to invest in more administrators and travel costs," Superintendent Garrett said. "We are excited about the opportunities it affords us as technology once again lowers the barrier of distance."

The need for adequate technology to assist teachers and students as well as for more businesslike and cost-effective school administration is, for the most part, being addressed through local bond issues. Some state and federal grants have been made available, however, and the discounted telecommunications rate (the e-rate) for schools provided through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) should be helpful. During the past year, the State Department of Education awarded \$8,676,526 in technology grants from a 1996 court settlement and federal Title III grant funds to 100 Oklahoma public schools.

More than 80 percent of the schools report they have at least one point of Internet access for instructional and business efficiency purposes, but less than 10 percent of schools have all their teachers trained to use the Internet. The SDE uses OneNet to provide access to its web site connecting school staff, students and the public to a rich resource of agency and K-12 education information.

Internet access is used by many schools to electronically send to the SDE statutorily required reports such as Income and Expenditures, Child Nutrition Program claims, Special Education Child Count Data and Teacher Personnel reports. SDE field personnel have moved much of their work to laptop computers including Accreditation reports, Child Nutrition reviews, and Special Education audits for faster and more efficient accountability. Oklahoma has actively supported the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1997 and as of January 11, 107 schools have received telecommunications discounts through the "E-rate."

Oklahoma Parents as Teachers (OPAT) began in 1991 with 13 pilot projects. After six years of continued support, there are 142 programs serving 210 public schools and some 6,100 families are projected to be served. The program is free to all families with children from birth through 36 months of age who reside in participating school districts.

Of the 5,142 families served by OPAT in 1997-98, two-thirds had at least one of the following risk factors:

- low-income families (43 percent),
- single parents (23 percent),
- mother without a high school diploma (16 percent) and
- teen parents (16 percent).

Public safety and welfare should always be among the state budget priorities but so should prevention. Oklahoma can reduce the societal costs of failure by preparing children from an early age for success in life.

A comprehensive dropout prevention program begins with intervention in the early grades and continues through Alternative Education Academies and alternative education programs in all

Oklahoma Parents As Teachers (OPAT) Growth of Funding and Services

	FUNDING PER YEAR	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS	FAMILIES SERVED
1991-92	\$650,000	13	377
1992-93	\$1,100,000	45	1,711
1993-94	\$1,600,000	75	3,005
1994-95	\$2,100,000	102	4,114
1995-96	\$1,959,144	99	4,063
1996-97	\$2,459,144	119	4,716
1997-98	\$2,459,144	118	5,142
1998-99	\$2,959,144	142	6,100* *projected estimate

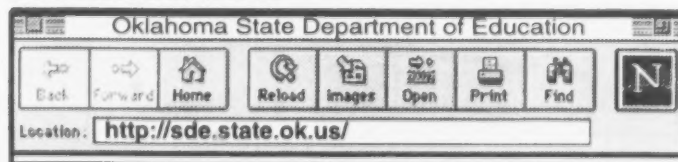
Source: State Department of Education, March 1998

schools. Through competitive grants to various sizes and locations of schools, the state is moving toward the year 2000 deadline for all schools to provide alternative education opportunities for students at risk of dropping out.

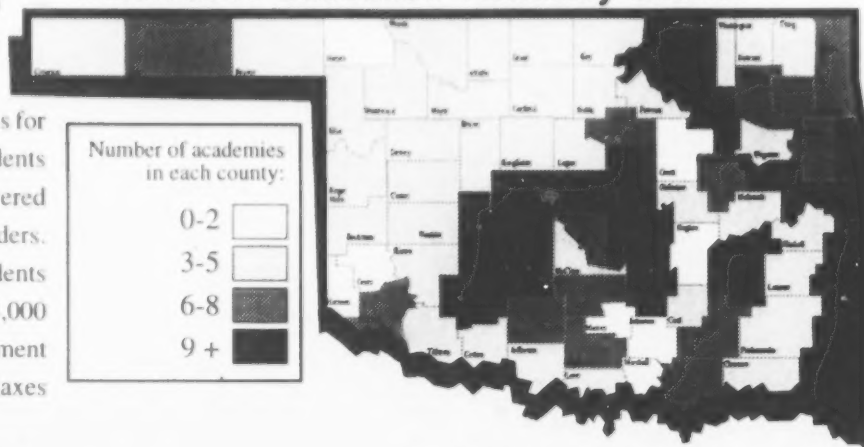
In 1997-98, more than 1,700 students were on waiting lists for alternative education programs. Of the nearly 13,336 students served, an average of 12.5 percent were considered recovered dropouts and 15-17 percent were self-reported juvenile offenders. Among the 179 districts with programs in 1998, 894 students graduated from high school, yielding an estimated \$72,414,000 positive economic impact on the state in terms of government services not expected to be needed by them and the predicted taxes they will pay in their lifetimes.

The State Department of Education also provides programs in schools statewide for more than 24,700 educationally disadvantaged adults through its Adult Basic Education efforts. Forty-two Adult Learning Centers with more than 500 teachers are operated statewide. New programs include a work force development program for workers at their job location; "Job-Link," an educational program for unemployed and underemployed citizens, and "Family Literacy," an intergenerational learning program.

**The Oklahoma State Department of Education
on the World Wide Web:**



Alternative Education Academy Grants



Source: Alternative Education, State Department of Education, January 1999

Programs include:

- 471 statewide academies
- 19 one-year grants
- 22 high-challenge grants

512 programs in 1998-99

Through contracts with the Department of Human Services, literacy instruction is provided for welfare clients to help them leave public assistance. The number of adults removed from public assistance with the help of Lifelong Learning programs is up from 206 in Fiscal Year 1994 to 316 two years later, with a total of 1,091 since the program began. More than 11,300 people took the GED (General Educational Development) tests in 1997 at 50 GED Testing Centers statewide; 8,002 GED certificates were issued.

Oklahoma's deregulation process makes it possible to streamline the rules (except those governing certification) to promote innovation. As one example, deregulation has been used by schools to adjust the school calendar to accommodate professional development at times more convenient for teachers.

Deregulation also has been used to develop Oklahoma City's "Enterprise Schools," which are like charter schools. Charter schools are deregulated public schools governed by teams of teachers and parents. However, because Oklahoma does not have a "charter school" law per se, the state is being denied use of federal funds simply because there is no law on the books authorizing schools to do something they are able to do without a law. The solution is to pass a "charter school" law which also allows Oklahomans more choices.

NEEDS

The State Board of Education's legislative proposals for 2000 outline current and future needs of public school students in order to continue the progress. Proposals fall into four main funding categories: Preparing for the Future, Dropout Prevention/At Risk Intervention, Incentives for Academic Excellence, and Services and Accountability.

Preparing for the Future proposals are targeted at direct funding for schools and children. Growth funding for schools and instructional materials (textbooks) are tops in this category. As more and more children enter school, additional resources are required. Technology funds are also included since a recent school technology survey found that a small percentage of classrooms

have dedicated Internet access and an equally small percentage of teachers are trained in using and supervising this instructional tool.

Dropout Prevention continues to be a focus of educators, along with new emphasis on providing early intervention services for students who are considered at risk of failure. Programs proposed range from Oklahoma Parents as Teachers (OPAT), statewide alternative education programs and reading for the early grades.

Incentives for Academic Excellence can help create a better learning environment. Such teaching areas as mathematics, science, special education and foreign languages have experienced shortages for several years. This is evident by the number of emergency certificates that have been issued. An emergency certificate is granted for no more than one year to individuals with

Teacher Shortage Areas

Based on Emergency Certificate Requests
Granted By the State Board of Education

- Mathematics
- Science
- Foreign Language
- Special Education
- Speech-Pathology
- Library Media
- Counseling
- Music

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1998

a bachelor's degree -- many in education -- but who lack requirements for standard certification. Superintendents request these certificates on behalf of individuals, supplying sworn, written testimony to the State Board of Education that they have been unsuccessful in recruiting a fully qualified individual for a position.

Emergency Certificates Issued by the State Board of Education

1994-95	296
1995-96	209
1996-97	272
1997-98	281
June 1998-January 1999	337

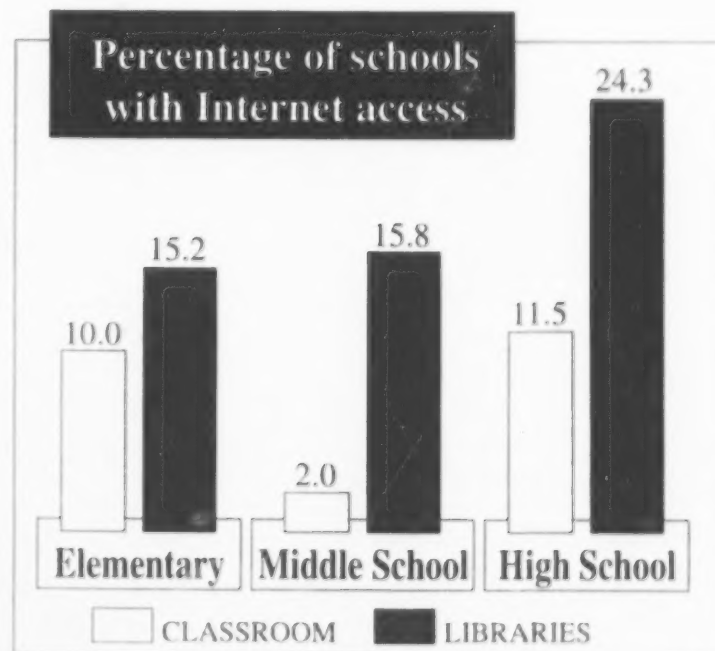
Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1998

The number of such requests has been high in recent years, primarily due to economics. Math, science, special education and foreign language teachers can simply earn more in neighboring states or other professional/career areas.

The Teaching Shortage Area Incentives Proposal could help remedy this serious situation. The proposal would provide scholarships to recruit Oklahoma higher education students in mathematics, science, foreign language and special education;

scholarships for currently certified Oklahoma teachers to pursue further education and become certified in one of those shortage areas; and incentive funding to teachers currently teaching in the shortage areas who meet specific criteria such as good teaching records. Also included are incentives for Advanced Placement teachers, students and schools.

The Services and Accountability area provides for increasing federally required matching funds and a voluntary consolidation effort.



Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1998

THE FUTURE

Oklahoma's investment in its children, 26.6 percent of the state's population, is much bigger than just its investment in schools. While public schools can provide a good foundation for success in life, the factors that affect children at home tend to be the biggest predictors of success in school.

The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA) has been monitoring the status of children for a number of years. From its most recent report:

- the rate of confirmed child abuse cases grew 57.9 percent from 1984-85 to 1995-96;
- the percent of children in poverty increased by 50.9 percent from 1980 to 1993; and
- the rate of juvenile arrests grew by 98 percent from 1990 to 1996.

An Oklahoma child is a victim of abuse or neglect every 45 minutes;
13 children have joined Oklahoma's poverty rolls every day since 1980;
nearly 1,300 children between the ages of 10 and 17 were arrested for violent crimes in 1996.

— The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy

The OICA uses the above and a number of other benchmarks, as do the State Department of Education and others, to monitor Oklahoma's progress.

"Progress is not just improving statistics," the 1998 Kids Count Factbook notes. "Progress is using all of this information — and more — to make good decisions about state and community budgets and programs that affect children and youth. Effective programs and policies work together with strong communities and families to improve the benchmarks. It's not just about numbers; each number has a face, a family, and a future."

Much progress has been made by educators, but much more needs to be done.

"Three things must occur before we can be assured we have done all we can:

- *Investment in our schools must remain the budget priority;*
- *greater efforts must be made to involve families in schools, and*
- *we must continue to strengthen our academic standards for students and our expectations of schools."*

— State Superintendent Sandy Garrett

Above are the areas the State Superintendent, Board of Education and Department staff pursue every day. While this report seeks to provide an accounting of the investment and the returns in Oklahoma schools, this investment is not measured simply in dollars nor are the benefits reaped simply in test scores.

*"Not everything that counts can be counted,
and not everything that can be counted counts."*

Albert Einstein

Appendix

Some historical notes:

- At the Territorial Legislature's first meeting in August 1890, legislators modified and adopted the school laws of Kansas as the laws for Oklahoma Territory. After ratification of the constitution on September 17, 1907, E. D. Cameron was elected Oklahoma's first state superintendent. The State Board of Education at the time oversaw all schools including colleges.

- The first biennial report of the state superintendent noted that in the 1906-07 school year there were approximately 167,803 pupils enrolled in public schools in "old Oklahoma" and about 32,431 pupils enrolled in public schools in that part of Oklahoma then known as Indian Territory.

- In 1914, Oklahoma had 5,880 school districts which is the largest number in any year since statehood. Schools were first established to be within walking distance of every child and were nine square miles in area. Between 1947 and 1965, almost 3,300 schools were annexed or consolidated.

- In 1919, the state Legislature made its first appropriation of \$100,000 "to help pay current expenses of financially weak schools"; this became an annual appropriation which by 1925 had reached \$500,000 per year. The State Equalization Fund was enacted in 1927, earmarking one-fourth of the revenue from gross production tax. In 1935, the Legislature passed the first state aid law, providing \$8,200,000 for each year of the biennium to allow schools to be in session a minimum term of 8 1/2 months. Prior to this, schools were in session from 3 to 8 months.

- In 1919, the Legislature legalized motorized vehicles for transportation of pupils which previously had been provided by horse-drawn vehicles. Local schools provided all transportation until the general equalization aid law of 1935, after which transportation became a part of the annual program of schools.

- In 1920, Congress enacted a measure "for the promotion of the vocational rehabilitation of persons disabled in industry or otherwise and their

return to civil employment." House Bill 151, passed by the 1945 session of the Oklahoma Legislature, was the first special education law in the state.

- The Indian Education Division of the State Department of Education was created under the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1936 as a cooperative effort of the Department, the U. S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U. S. Department of the Interior.

- An Act of Congress, effective June 4, 1946, provided for a school lunch program on a permanent basis. As a civilian component of the national defense, the Civil Defense Adult Education program was created in 1964.

- The Oklahoma School Code was enacted in 1947 to repeal obsolete and contradictory laws not meeting the needs of modern schools, group all statutes bearing on a particular subject, and provide new laws needed to improve administration of schools. The Code (Title 70) has been added to, deleted from and expanded upon but is the basis of school law in Oklahoma today.

- Continuing education for locally elected school board members was mandated in the 1963 legislative session. Workshops have been provided by the Department and Oklahoma State School Boards Association and others since then. In 1990, additional education requirements were mandated for board members.

- In 1980, educational reform legislation (House Bill 1706) mandated testing for teachers and administrators; creating the Residency Program, a monitoring program for all first-year teachers; and providing funding to districts for professional development.

- The Department has been active in the development of distance learning in its various forms throughout the state, helping develop the state's first fiber-optic network for Panhandle schools in the late 1980s.

- The Education Reform Act of 1990 was signed into law in April of that year by Governor Henry Bellmon in ceremonies at a Tulsa school with Senate President Pro Tempore Robert V. Cullison, Speaker of the House Steve Lewis, then Secretary of Education Sandy Garrett and Chairman of Task Force 2000 George Singer. In November 1991, voters cast their ballots two-to-one against a state question to repeal the new law.